THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

Vol. 9 Winter · 1939 - 1940 No. 1

Editorial	*William Allan Neilson*
The Paradox of Intellectual Freedom	*John Herman Randall, Jr.*
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Editorial

WILLIAM ALLAN NEILSON

THE table of contents of a journal of contemporary thought, such as THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR aspires to be, may reflect, more than its editors are aware, the salient features of the modern scene. If one analyzes the subjects dealt with in the present issue, one finds that three deal with poetry, technical science, and scholarship; the rest with some aspect of politics. Mr. Mandelbaum inquires into the possibility of a philosophy of history, and gives us assurance that, though the attempt to achieve such a philosophy in the traditional sense must always be futile, empirical principles may yet be derived from history to give aid to the social scientist. Mr. Mann gives a disconcerting picture of the wholesale desertion by a large number of States of what we had been taught to regard as a fundamental principle of our American federation. Mr. Borgese traces with a wide sweep the history of the postulates of the political science of antiquity through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance to their modern perversion into the politics of sheer force. But it is in the articles of Mr. Ascoli and Mr. Randall that we meet what may be regarded as the crucial problem perplexing the minds of those who seek a clue to the political labyrinth in which we are wandering today.

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Mr. Randall analyzes the concept of Intellectual Freedom, distinguishing it clearly from the question of freedom of expression with which Mr. Ascoli is concerned. Having shown the impossibility of completely liberating our minds from the influence of our origins and our environment, he restores hope by insisting that freedom is not single and general, but freedoms are many and specific; and that though we can never be absolutely free, we may have a choice of what we shall serve. He closes with an inspiring appeal for the application of intelligence to the problems of politics.

In Mr. Ascoli's discussion of freedom of speech we come to grips with the most insistent issue of the day, the question whether liberalism can be defended by liberal means. Everyone who has followed the overthrow of liberal constitutionalism in half the countries of Europe has been brought face to face with the fact that tyranny tends to force upon its victims and opponents the use of the weapons which they hate. Tolerance seems to become weakness when it permits the intolerant to undermine the foundations of liberty, yet, if it ceases to tolerate its opponents, it ceases to be tolerance. Mr. Ascoli stresses one reason given by the upholders of civil liberties for their tolerance—the risk of having their own freedom one day curtailed, and this he criticizes severely. He urges liberals to adopt more active policies —the use of investigations to throw light on the motives and the forces behind the noisy extremists who threaten to subvert our liberties, and the use of repression.

Two comments suggest themselves: First, that the fear of losing one's own freedom of speech is not the only reason for granting it to others; there is always the chance that we may be wrong and the others right, and so far free discussion seems to have been the best method of arriving at truth; Second, that investigation needs the right kind of investigator (and the process is shadowed at the moment by thoughts of Mr. Dies); and that repression, on which Mr. Ascoli abstains from being specific, is a word of evil omen.

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The Paradox of Intellectual Freedom

JOHN HERMAN RANDALL, JR.

IN THE chronicles of history, 1939 will stand as the year in which Americans discovered their priceless heritage of *intellectual freedom* and organized to defend it. This deep concern, it will be recorded, was not confined just to those with so virgin an experience as to preserve a shameless enthusiasm for ideas. It was not limited to newly-educated seniors enduring the trials of commencement addresses, nor to that group of liberal journalists and writers, popular preachers and open-minded professors for whom the happy blend of knowledge with irresponsibility has earned the name of "intellectuals." Its appeal was so great and so widespread that it replaced "peace" as the football of the politicians of the Left and promised a new meal-ticket to the statesmen of the Right. Indeed, "intellectual freedom" was one of those blessed discoveries, a symbol that could unite Americans against all that was wicked, depraved and incomprehensible in the goings-on of other peoples. Deans ventured to speak of it to alumni. Droves of college presidents issued manifestos in its favor. Bankers underwrote it. Dorothy Thompson explained its implications. Even Phi Beta Kappa came out for it.

So it seems we are all for intellectual freedom these days. I fear no dissent—unless it is "cultural freedom" you prefer, and then your deviation is both dialectical and inevitable. We might find it hard to explain just what it is we are all for and just how we are going to defend it. But at least there is no doubt what we are all against. Our warm indignation, to be sure, has so far been neither notably intellectual nor particularly free. It might well lead to more impressive results had we a better

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understanding of its objects and were it a little freer from entanglement in the toils of our various party politics. But though they be not too effective our emotions are at least generous and our platforms ingenious. More questionable is the fighting psychology, the sense of war to the death, that blinds so many of our hearts and heads. For it is a fact, sad but inescapable, that the most earnest and righteous battle leaves no room for the inquiring mind. Those who would save freedom of thought by taking up arms must first lose it. This fact is worth pondering. It brings some inkling of understanding to the tragedy of those we despise. And it suggests we think a little more deeply before in the delight of fighting those we hate, by declaration or by deed, we lightly sacrifice the freedom we yet have.

So today we need no pep-talk to rouse our fighting spirit, no mere waving the flag of intellectual freedom. That flag we are already resolved to defend, to the last drop of blood of the last Frenchman or Briton. Nor need we seriously consider whether it were a real service to intellectual freedom to shoot off—or to starve off—all the Germans, Russians, and Japanese. Many of them are doing abominable things we should like to see stopped; and one stick is as good as another to belabor them with, if we must. Hence I do not propose to speak of those we hate, or to use a popular symbol in the present fashion, whether to glorify American complacency or to hurl anathemas at peoples once mighty in the faith who have fallen from grace. It may be naive to assume that those nowadays so eager to serve "intellectual freedom" mean anything at all by it. But I judge the reason it is so effective a symbol for releasing our anger and mobilizing our hatred is just that it does stand for something we think we love. And it is that something I want to examine.

What do we really mean by intellectual freedom? We all agree it is a priceless blessing. You and I will never give it up. But it is exceeding hard to defend, far harder than our leagues and declarations would have it, and exceeding easy to sacrifice the substance in fighting for the name. And it is still harder

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to discover what it is, or rather, what it would be if we had it; for it needs little reflection to realize that far from being a familiar American heritage, freedom of the mind is hardly yet a landmark on the American scene.

I am not talking of that collection of legal rights and liberties we group together as freedom of expression or of that set of ill-defined conventions and aspirations we dignify as academic freedom. Of them Americans have indeed a precious heritage, confined to be sure within shifting limits decent and indecent. We do well to guard them jealously, and still better to organize to defend them and to extend them. For it is not enough to preserve them in the clear-cut and familiar cases: only the unremitting struggle to apply them in those new situations in which their observance is not yet habitual and recognized can keep them from slowly dissolving away. It still costs us great effort to maintain the liberties of men whose ideas are so unconventional as to be un-American, or whose tactics are so unaccustomed as to be unmannerly. The best of us, I fear, share something of the feeling of the Texas editor who boasted "In our town everybody has complete freedom of speech, except the radicals." And it goes without saying that only the most vigorous organization, political and professional, can effect this defense and extension. In times of rapid change, when feelings run high and ideas are rightly taken seriously, men with the best of intentions as well as men with the worst strike out at those they fear.

The rights to discuss and communicate ideas are indispensable conditions of intellectual freedom; without them the mind withers and dies. But they scarcely make up what we mean by free intellect itself: that, alas, is not so easy to obtain or defend. A society where anybody can say whatever comes into his head is not necessarily a society of free minds. He who has ever suffered at a public forum knows the gulf between free speech and free thought. The former our human courts and judges can measurably secure; the latter the good Lord himself has been unable to guarantee.

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Now there are many sound and excellent reasons for granting the utmost freedom of expression even to those who seldom or never think. Blowing off steam has its points over blowing up the government; it is more satisfying to the blower and much less upsetting to his neighbors. Those who can talk and play politics don't have to conspire; and so deans sleep of nights because college faculties never rebel. A man with something on his mind, though the burden be infinitesimal, still keeps his self-respect if he can get it off his chest. But the chief reason, I take it, we so profoundly cherish our liberties of expression is that we desperately hope that out of them may emerge something of a genuine freedom of mind. And often the miracle happens: from the discussion and inquiry of average men there comes an intelligence and a wisdom that Fuehrers might well envy. Those perpetual miracles, our modern schools, can do the trick with surprising success. By sheer freedom of expression, it seems, and without teaching anything at all, they can turn out extraordinarily competent products who need only to learn something to be first-rate stuff.

No, were our liberties of expression not the soil in which to cultivate a freedom of the mind they would scarcely deserve our passionate defense. They would then be mere useful devices, born of the wisdom of experience, for smoothing over the frictions of social living and keeping men's passions below the boiling-point. We could still question the prudence of nations that sacrificed them to other ends. Mindful of the wisdom of Talleyrand, that you can do everything with bayonets except sit on them, we could with some patience await the event. We might even wonder whether on the drug of propaganda one cannot also sleep. But were the enterprise magnificent enough —did it really promise to abolish the age-old fear of insecurity and want—we might well be tempted to pay the heavy price. We too might listen, as so many have of late, to that ancient counsel of the disillusioned men of Athens, to grant intellectual liberties only to them that know—until they know too much. The temptation is all the stronger since today it is so clear that

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without security from want a free mind can never be a sure social possession.

A "free mind" indeed! Are we men, or are we only liberals? Are not those right who tell us "intellectual freedom" is a contradiction in terms? Can it mean anything but freedom to impose our ideas on others? Speech, discussion, yes, even teaching—we can understand how by ceaseless care they may be made relatively free. But how can mind, how can what we think, how can knowledge of what is so, possibly be free? How can our thought hope to escape the passions and prejudices, the ignorance and the interests in which it is inevitably rooted? And does not any measure of success involve in turn a surrender to the compulsion of truth? Does not the very nature of thinking lie in bondage to its human origins and in submission to the rigorous conditions of its validity?

When we speak so hopefully of defending the mind against external and artificial restraints we are forgetting internal and natural bonds far more pervasive and inescapable. The wisdom of a century of psychologists, social scientists and historians might have taught us what slaves we are to our fellows and to our past. Our most daring thoughts, we know, ripen in the long tradition and accumulated knowledge of our society; our feelings and our opinions are rooted in the thousand social habits and attitudes that make us what we are. Our institutions, our class, our group, our profession—these limit and shape our mind at every turn. Our most original innovators are linked most closely with their predecessors; even our boasted pursuit of what we like to call "free inquiry" is so dependent on a fragile chain of scientific tradition, so exposed to every wave of popular feeling, that it is the first victim of any social shock. And then we fancy we are intellectually free—we who can so easily explain the historical sources, the emotional roots and the class bias of any man's ideas!

No, as every freshman knows, and as any psychologist or economist could tell him if he has forgotten, the freedom of thinking cannot mean sheer detached independence. No man

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can hope to achieve it in isolation from his fellows. A free mind is born only of a society that has carefully built up the institutions and conditions needed to generate it. Whatever intellectual freedom may be, it is clearly a social before it is an individual possession, the product of a complex and delicate cultural fabric. Unless all the institutions of that society, from lowest to highest, are so ordered as to foster it no mere guarantee of civil liberties will suffice. Where they are not, the most untrammeled academic freedom will never free us from the academic mind.

That is why to pursue intellectual freedom involves us at once in every other social problem, so inextricably that really to achieve it we should need to have solved them all; why our most valiant efforts to "defend" it by itself, our unending protests against crude legal and external restraints, take us so short a way. For it is no family heirloom for Americans to guard proudly and complacently: to come within hailing distance will take a drastic revolution in all our attitudes and institutions, a revolution to make our reddest radical programs pale into pink. We shall need enough patient and sustained work to satisfy the most constructive conservative and all the hard struggle the most determined radical could wish. We shall have plenty of time to abolish economic insecurity and clean up war before our college faculties are societies of really free minds.

Yet we Americans have made a fair beginning at the foundations. Just because the structure is so delicately balanced and takes generations to rear we must be ever watchful lest some seductive solution to a pressing ill send what we have crashing to the ground. We have seen how easy it is, under the imperative compulsion of an immediate goal, to wreck overnight all that a great nation had built up for centuries. With the example of Germany before us we should be slaves indeed if because we too must organize the life of our body economic we too should blast the life of the spirit.

If in its origins thought cannot hope to be free—if it is so deeply rooted in the social and cultural soil in which it grows

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that not in independence of his age, his society, his class or his education but only as they too are "free" can a mind become free—surely then it is to the fruits of thought that we must look for thought's freedom. Not in the limitations and relativities whence thinking springs but in what it does and what it brings —in the operations of free inquiry and the knowledge it discovers, there if anywhere lies emancipation. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

But despite the Evangelist we are not yet come to the end of our quest. We have rather arrived at the central paradox of intellectual freedom, with which the greatest minds have wrestled and failed to agree. For in its very nature, it has seemed, the last thing intellect is or can hope to be, is free. The fruit of intelligence and knowledge is not freedom. It is power, or it is understanding; and neither leaves the mind with any unfettered choice. For power is no liberator: it rather sets conditions and obligations of its own from which there is no escape. The more power we possess to do what we can the more we are bound to conform to those conditions and to observe those obligations—and the more inexorably intelligence is compelled to seek what they are, and how what that power can do must be done. And the compulsion of understanding, though less harsh, is no less ultimate. For to know what is, and why it must be so, may indeed win us release from the vain endeavor to do what cannot be done; but in abandoning the illusion of external power we are none the less bound to be what we are and to do what we must. Neither with the power to do, nor with the understanding why, can the mind find independence of circumstance or hope to legislate its own career. The knowledge that is power makes us slaves of the responsibilities of power. And the knowledge that is understanding can set us free only by convicting us of powerlessness to alter what we are and must be. We are caught in the cruel dilemma: if knowledge be power it brings no freedom; if knowledge bring freedom it is at the price of impotence.

From St. Augustine down the keenest intellect has without

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avail rung the changes on this dialectic of freedom. The classic solution seeks victory in the defeat itself: it finds the mind's freedom to lie in its very bondage to the conditions of its power, in complete surrender to the command of rational necessity. Perfect freedom, it concludes, can be no other than perfect obedience to perfect law.

In two ways men have tried to break through the chain; at best they make the surrender somewhat more palatable. Francis Bacon turned away from perfect law and sought a new kind of knowledge, the knowledge that is power over the world's processes, the busy intelligence of the craftsman and technician extending the bounds of human empire over Nature to the effecting of all things possible. Surely the more things we know how to do, the greater our freedom! But Bacon realized that Nature to be commanded must be obeyed; and a society that has more than fulfilled his prophesies of human power has drawn ever tighter about itself the web of bondage to technology, until what we must now do to maintain our control over Nature has robbed us of all freedom to do anything else, or to choose another destiny. Intelligence, the power of knowing how, has brought us untold riches and untold responsibilities; it has taught us what must be done and how we must do it. But it has not made us free.

Spinoza identified knowledge with a far different power, the power over ourselves and our passions. For him knowledge was not intelligence, not knowing how, but rather understanding, knowing why—in the end, sheer intellectual vision. Men are free, not when they are doing what they can but when they see why they are doing as they must. They are freest of all in the vision of themselves as parts of the great Scheme of things: knowing themselves at last for what they are, in the very understanding of their impotence to be otherwise they are released from bondage to any desire to be so. We have the power to do what we must and to accept our own destiny. Spinoza had ample precedent for calling this power "freedom"; but that did not make it any the less an impotence and a necessity. His

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many successors—idealistic philosophers, social scientists, psychologists and historians, all those who have contributed so mightily to our understanding of man—have transformed it from a thing difficult as it was rare to something we can now teach to every freshman. And this understanding of human nature and human society, the knowing why, the vision of what it means to be a rational animal, has for many brought acceptance and peace and for many others bondage to some great social ideal. But it too has not made us free.

On the one side lies the bondage of understanding and vision, the bondage of impotence; on the other the bondage of intelligence, the bondage of power. Where lies freedom of the mind? With him who understands why, with the artist, the poet, the social scientist, the historian? or with him who knows how, with the engineer, the technician, the administrator and executive, the politician? Despite our philosophies of power, we have traditionally answered, freedom is possible only for the impotent. By a "free mind" we have meant one detached from all obligation and responsibility; to its emancipation power has seemed fatal. It must feel no sense of urgency in values, it must not know how to do anything—or if it should, the doing must be quite useless. We still call those studies which give a vision of human nature the liberal arts, and that discipline which fails to teach men how to do anything at all a liberal education. Both the impotent who understand and the powerful who know how have had good reason to encourage this prejudice. The impotent have found consolation in their freedom and the powerful have found safety in the impotence of the wise.

But it should be clear today that neither those who know why without knowing how, nor those who know how without knowing why, can claim to be free minds. It is this very divorce between understanding and intelligence, between vision and power, that has made possible the destruction of intellectual freedom where it has been destroyed. This was the tragic guilt of German culture at its best; let it be our warning. For

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our education also is disastrously divided. So long as we too are content to graduate able technicians without understanding and well-educated men who know how to do nothing, all our defense of freedom will be a losing struggle. With experts who are illiberal and short-sighted, and intellectuals who are irresponsible and unintelligent, we cannot hope to win. Unless vision be married to intelligence there can be no freedom of the mind. The Chicago prophets of intellectual celibacy cannot make us free.

Knowledge is power, and power is bondage—that wisdom cannot be gainsaid. But our mistake has been to take all bondage as the utter destruction of freedom. And we have made the mistake because we have assumed that freedom is a single thing, one and undivided, which we must possess whole and entire or not at all. If that assumption be true, then intellectual freedom is indeed a paradox that drives us to make freedom and bondage, power and obligation, one and the same. This dialectic may satisfy our philosophies of freedom but it hardly fits our needs. But we can escape it if we realize that freedom is not general but specific and determinate: it is release from one kind of bondage the better to assume the yoke of another. It can never mean the escape from all obligation. Freedoms and obligations are both correlative and plural, and each is at once a freedom from this and a submission to that. Knowledge itself is both an emancipation and an exchange of bondages: it frees us from the slavery of ignorance for the service of the conditions and responsibilities of knowing. Without losing its determinate nature, thought can never be wholly free; nor can it be wholly bound without ceasing to be thought.

But if freedoms be indeed many and not one we have managed to transform the historic paradox into a problem—the problem of securing the greatest range of specific freedoms, each with its own insistent commands. And our task has ceased to be to strive for a forever-unattainable goal of ideal and complete freedom; it is rather to multiply and strengthen the manifold freedoms of the mind. They are various and conflicting;

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they display incompatibilities that may well prove ultimate. To balance them and adjust them to each other in the shifting pattern of social change is a never-ending process calling for ceaseless effort; for now one suffers and needs renewed emphasis, now another is slighted and needs bolstering up. But to balance and adjust them is the proper task of a rational animal. To harmonize the freedoms and the obligations of thought is an end for our education to aim at and for all our work of social reconstruction to keep in mind.

And so it's not so strange that we should be calling on intellectual freedom when we really mean we'd like to stop Hitler, or wish they would teach more Latin, or are just trying to pay the rent. Those are all good things to do, and it is the very nature of freedom to consist in that kind of specific fight. But once we've invoked it in some pressing need we've let ourselves in for more than we've bargained for. We're committed to all the other freedoms of the mind as well. And that's a large order—larger, I fear, than most of the valiant defenders of intellectual freedom today are willing to fill. I'll pass over the college presidents, and the radical politicians. Take Dorothy Thompson. Aren't there some important freedoms of the mind even she hasn't got around to remembering? And aren't we all today infected with acute Thompsonitis? This epidemic disorder is caused by a too exclusive diet of headlines; the only cure is a more varied intellectual fare.

And it would help to remember that understanding has its freedoms, and that intelligence is a matter of rigorous obligations. As it is, I'm afraid we've got them quite turned around. We've been boasting too long of the freedom of intelligence; little wonder many have fled to the Word of God, which does not chatter, or to the dialectic of history, which speaks in deeds. And we've been content to shudder and glory in the bondage of understanding: we who know it all today all know the worst, and we have never raised a finer crop of irrepressible conflicts and inevitable dooms. As every columnist can explain, and does daily, if the Nazis don't get us the Communists will,

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and what's left will be polished off by the axis of Trotzky, the Japs and the national debt. Now that's really no way to preserve intellectual freedom. That's not even slavery—that's just plain insanity.

Yes, we need the emancipation of real understanding: we sorely need to cultivate the freedoms of the mind. Most of all we need the freedom from the provincialism of the present, the freedom won by communion with the things that endure. There are the great achievements of mankind, in art, in thought, and in deed, that almost atone for its manifold follies, and liberate us from a too narrow preoccupation with the problems of the passing present. There is the priceless record of human experience in all its variety of greatness and weakness, that vision of the rationality and the animality of human nature, that justifies the claim of the humanities to be truly liberal arts and makes them a necessary part of the furniture of any free mind. There is the lesson of other cultures and other civilizations that there are many forms of social organization under which men can lead a richly satisfying life—a lesson that can reconcile us to the price we must pay for the changes our power has made necessary. There are the eternal visions of religion, the past's chief avenue of escape from the insistence of the moment; they still have their power of deliverance, if religion be no mere social work or sentimental politics but the human seeing of God. And there are those ingenious schemes for fitting the puzzle of history together whereby the Marxian can regard Fascism as the last stage in capitalist decay and even the Republican can understand the New Deal.

We need too that freedom from the tyrannous fear of the future that comes from the vision of history itself: the vision that sees men forever engaged in conflicts and insistent problems, each new one, though it seem today a crisis in the universe, but one more incident in a long series, with an endless chain yet to come—the vision that reveals comedy as more ultimate than tragedy, and takes mankind beyond the

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tragedies of men. "It is five minutes to twelve," we are told; "it is later than you think." No, short-sighted little man, it is still long before dawn. We need patience—the patience that is not cast down by a few failures, that does not demand that every problem be solved at once but is willing to try and try again. It is the impatient, who know the answer and cannot wait till others have learned it too, who are responsible for the intolerance and brutality and fanatical temper of today. We need to face remorseless change as itself an enduring fact, to be accepted, understood and worked with as intelligently as possible, not as a cosmic crisis in which by a last supreme effort we must finally vanquish the Devil and usher in the Kingdom of God, or perish in the attempt.

And we need freedom from yearning after the impossible and from despair at the limitations of our power. We cannot set the world to rights overnight, we who can barely look to our own ills. We need freedom to discriminate, clearly if regretfully, what we can reasonably hope to do from what we must renounce. We cannot keep the Japs out of China. We cannot save the Germans from Hitler. We cannot give order and peace to a Europe that cannot yet help itself. It is bondage to romantic illusions to think we can. And it were worse than bondage, it were disaster, to lead another sentimental crusade for these generous but impossible ends. In these harsh times there is much we might do, yet with that we have still to make a beginning. We dream of ending the menace of Hitler, yet for his tragic victims we have made not a single move to set our gates ajar. We who would save the world will not even do what we can. Till we have made the sad renunciation of the impossible we shall not be free to do what we must.

For in the end all the freedoms of the mind are but a sterile and a bitter bondage if they fail to free us to obey the commands of intelligence. There is no need to belabor so insistent and so obvious a fact. You know and I know the problems that must be met. In a world in which we can and do exercise so marvelous a power over Nature, those problems are set for us

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by that power itself. If we are to exert it, if we are even to live with it, we know what must be done. If we have thought at all, if we have submitted to the conditions of inquiry and surrendered our minds to what has been discovered, we already know how to do much that must be done. What we do not yet know is how to enlist the cooperative support of men in doing what we know how to do. We do not yet possess the political intelligence to persuade men to use the intelligence we do possess. There lies the most insistent problem of all. There is the real obstacle to intellectual freedom today. For it is our ignorance and our failures in political techniques and methods that are causing all our other freedoms to falter. To work upon this problem of developing political intelligence is the first obligation of all the intelligence we can muster. To give up in despair—to fail to see that political skill is itself a technical problem, to which inquiry can bring an answer, to deny that men can ever be intelligently persuaded to use intelligence, to drug them with passionate hatred, to coerce them with brute force—whatever the trappings and the glory, that is not power but slavery. And that is to abandon all hope of intellectual freedom. We should thank God that in America we have made a beginning with political intelligence, and that we are already free enough to work intelligently for the freedoms of the mind.

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T. S. Eliot and the Laodiceans

BABETTE DEUTSCH

PROTESTING against the misinterpretations of rash critics, T. S. Eliot once remarked that if "Ash-Wednesday" should go into a second edition he might preface it with these lines from *Don Juan*:

> Some have accused me of a strange design
> Against the creed and morals of the land,
> And trace it in this poem every line.
> I don't pretend that I quite understand
> My own meaning when I would be *very* fine;
> But the fact is that I have nothing planned
> Unless it were to be a moment merry . . .

It is easier to imagine Byron as merry than Mr. Eliot, who seems to forget that he has elsewhere confessed his prejudice in favor of suffering as the source and stuff of poetry, and, further, his belief that only in an evil world is life worth living. If we examine the body of his work, from his startling beginnings to the pieties of his most recent utterance, it is with this evil world that he has been concerned. Both passion and patience are related to suffering, in something more than the etymological sense. But his interest fastens with peculiar horror upon those wretches who are neither patient nor passionate: upon Prufrock, caught in revisions and indecisions, asking, "Would it have been worth it, after all?", upon the inhabitants of the Waste Land, the hollow men, the stuffed men, upon Apeneck Sweeney, bored by the relentless cycle of birth and copulation and death. St. John saw such as these spewed out of the mouth of God for that they were neither hot nor cold. Dante declared that Hell would not receive them, for the damned would glory over them, who were without blame as they were without praise.

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Some modern writers have spoken of them as Anti-Christ, as our neighbor, as ourself.

In Eliot's earliest work the horror is not immediately apparent, perhaps because he was so successful in finding an "objective correlative" for his emotion. This discovery was not the least astonishing element in his performance. Instead of moving from the personal lyric to the dramatic objectification of his private feelings, he reversed the process. The boy of twenty-one wrote "The Portrait of a Lady," the dramatis personae of which could not conceivably have included himself. The mature man writes religious poems and plays which set forth his own dilemmas and convictions almost as unmistakably as do his prose professions of faith, and of the doubt that he claims to be intrinsic to it.

What is evident in those first poems is his preoccupation with men and women who have a fatal incapacity for life. Prufrock wonders if he dares disturb the universe by a question which may be misunderstood, leaving him embarrassed and dismayed. He ends by wondering if he should part his hair behind, if he dares to eat a peach. The Lady of the Portrait, tentative, pitiable and slightly disgusting, is confronted by a young man whose self-possession is shaken by a barrel-organ tune and a whiff of hyacinths, "Recalling things that other people have desired." The mysterious personae in "La Figlia Che Piange" are equally inconclusive in their attitudes.

It is easy to read into these pieces, in the light of his later performance, the fascination exercised over the poet by those who "are not men enough to be damned." But it needed no foresight to see in them when they were first published a terrifying awareness of the circumstances of vulgar urban life, together with the power of conveying it by the precise word, the subtle cadence, the scrupulously chosen concrete detail.

How profoundly he has influenced his juniors is plain in what might be called the rat-and-bone school of poetry. It will be remembered that his first models were the Elizabethan dramatists, the English Metaphysicals and the French Symbolists.

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However far he has ranged since, what he took from these various sources remains the distinguishing feature of his verse and has penetrated most deeply into the work of his successors. And all three of these influences, in one fashion or another, impelled him to attend to the vermin gnawing in the subterranean corridor, to "the skull beneath the skin." From the Symbolists came, along with their fluent line, their method of free association. The resultant juxtaposing of the lyrical and the anti-poetic revealed his sensitiveness to the more sordid aspects of the contemporary scene, as the anatomizing of the psyche, performed with interesting differences by a Laforgue and a Donne, led him into catacombs, cellars and sewers that he might else have failed to explore. Similarly, it was not only the manipulation of blank verse that he learned from the Elizabethans. They had decorated with the trophies of the new learning a stage on which was enacted, among other things, the tragedies provided by bloody Italian statecraft. Eliot, likewise, ornamented his verse with the admired treasures of Greece and Rome and at the same time observed, even before Mussolini improved on Borgian gangsterism, the mean end of desperate ambitions and violent lusts.

It is not the violence that preoccupies him: it is the meanness of the end. Repeatedly we find him contrasting the glories of a cruel but daring past with the shabbiness of the timid present. The rats and bones become emblems not merely of the cemetery but of a decaying civilization. The dust is not that to which we are consigned by the burial service but that which surrounds the sparrows in the gutters, settles on the furniture in dingy rooms, is blown about by the draught under the lodging-house door and fills the desert of the spirit.

Eliot's followers were not merely copying the same models or practicing the same exercises when they produced verse bristling with ironic contrasts and moving readily from a pure lyricism to conversational prose. They were responding to the same scene with the same emotions, appropriately expressing

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their response to its confusion. Scientific discoveries, as Wordsworth had foreseen, had become the material of poetry because they affected men as enjoying and suffering beings. But the effect was more complex than Wordsworth had anticipated. Fantastic technological progress was accompanied by a devastating breakdown in the economic framework of society. Moreover, such new techniques of communication as the cinema and the radio revealed at once the ingenuity of the minds that created them and the vacuity of those who profited by them. Revolutionary inventions, when they were not put to base uses, were revealing the dismal state of Western culture. The poets, looking, as Eliot had bidden them do, not only into their hearts but into their viscera, looked under the surface of this mechanized, industrialized, urban civilization as well and, like him, registered their disgust at what they found there. The sordid backstreets, the cheap furnished rooms, the "sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells" and the garden where the classic statuary is more alive than the ladies and gentlemen, of whom the poet remembers only "a slice of lemon and a bitten macaroon," are images that recur in the verse of those who had read Eliot's poetry and observed Eliot's world.

His own response to the hollowness and vulgarity of that world becomes increasingly exacerbated. In revolt against the laxness with which free verse was being written he returned to the strict quatrains of Gautier, and these later pieces reveal a precision that he probably learned from this master. His use of tone-color is more sensitive here, his choice of epithet more satisfying and the distaste with which his subject-matter inspires him has grown proportionately. If it is difficult to believe that the author of *The Rock* wrote "The Hippopotamus" and "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service," it is even more difficult to realize that the ironist who produced those sardonic commentaries on "religious caterpillars" was capable of the tenderness that marks the later *Ariel* poems. Eliot's range is greater than one is apt to admit on first consideration. But though the music alters it returns repeatedly to the note of horror with

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which it opened. This note is seldom as intense as in the concise and terrible lyrics that make up the Sweeney cycle. Nor is there a finer instance of Eliot's method and its meaning than "Sweeney Among the Nightingales." Here a trivial intrigue involving Sweeney's disreputable companions is juxtaposed to the central episode in the tragedy of the house of Atreus. The first quatrain presents Apeneck Sweeney. The second sets the tone of menace, emphatically in the lines:

> Death and the Raven drift above
> And Sweeney guards the hornèd gate.

The gate of horn, it will be remembered, is that through which true dreams come, as contrasted with the ivory gate through which issue false dreams. In Symbolist poetry, as in dream-life, objects grow out of emotions, instead of emotions, as in real life, clustering about objects. Eliot seems to be saying here that, in taking account of the ugly object summoned by the emotion of horror, he is dreaming true. Characteristically the poet leaves the Sweeney story vague while selecting concrete details that underscore the atmosphere of sordid stratagem.

> Gloomy Orion and the Dog
> Are veiled; and hushed the shrunken seas;
> The person in the Spanish cape
> Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees
>
> Slips and pulls the table cloth
> Overturns a coffee-cup,
> Reorganised upon the floor
> She yawns and draws a stocking up;
>
> The silent man in mocha brown
> Sprawls at the window-sill and gapes;
> The waiter brings in oranges
> Bananas figs and hothouse grapes;
>
> The silent vertebrate in brown
> Contracts and concentrates, withdraws;
> Rachel *née* Rabinovich
> Tears at the grapes with murderous paws . . .

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And then, without comment, the poet turns to look back:

> The host with someone indistinct
> Converses at the door apart,
> The nightingales are singing near
> The Convent of the Sacred Heart,
>
> And sang within the bloody wood
> When Agamemnon cried aloud,
> And let their liquid siftings fall
> To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.

The extreme beauty of the quatrain, where the sound-pattern is managed with impeccable skill, at once supporting and transcending the prose sense of the passage, repays analysis. Omitting discussion of the technical triumph in the final quatrain, we may observe that the poet, with a romanticism he has denied, is exalting the past and sneering at the present scene, harking back with bitterness to the glory that was Greece, to crime dignified by passion and terrible retribution. We may suggest that he is taking an unfair advantage in contrasting a royal legend with a mysterious and probably dull anecdote about the far from admirable Sweeney. And he might conceivably reply that he could find no living kings and heroes about whom he cared to write, that the world was governed by Sweeney and his kind and that this was the source of the poet's suffering and the subject of his poem. It may be said in passing that while Eliot harps upon the necessity for a depersonalized poetry he has also admitted that "what every poet starts from is his own emotions."

The central point of Eliot's performance is of course "The Waste Land." The theme, again, is one of frustration, enlarged by reference to the sympathetic magic of ancient vegetation cults and their re-emergence in medieval legend. Since the poem deals with the misery of an infertile life, rootless, barren, dispersed, it is suggestive that the first characters to be introduced should be tourists and exiles. Physical barrenness is represented as the counterpart and the image of the spiritual blight that

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lies upon the western world. The method is that of the Symbolists, imagination distorting reality to disguise or disclose its meaning, as in dreams, the poem weaving back and forth between past and present, memories of lost splendor sharpening the harsh actuality of present tedium and sordidness, the significance of every scene deepened by a deliberate allusiveness which reverberates in the accompanying music. Eliot did not need to announce his agreement with Jonson's dictum that a poet must "be able to convert the substances, or riches, of another poet, to his own use." His work is a testament to that belief. Here he also converts his own riches to new uses.

Not the least interesting aspect of "The Waste Land" is the way in which it assembles images and symbols that appear in earlier and later lyrics. Thus the frustrate Lady of the Portrait slowly twisting the lilac-stalks, the weeping girl in the garden of "La Figlia Che Piange," and the child recalled by the waiter in "Dans Le Restaurant" (*Elle était toute mouillée, je lui ai donné des primevères*") enter in the first part of the poem, introduced by a passage from the sailor's song in *Tristan*:

> "You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;
> They called me the hyacinth girl."
> —Yet when we came back, late, from the Hyacinth garden,
> Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
> Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
> Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
> Looking into the heart of light, the silence.
> *Oed' und leer das Meer.*

The story of Philomela displayed above the antique mantle of the nervous lady of fashion, that transmogrified Cleopatra, suggests the contrasts presented in "Sweeney Among the Nightingales." The slum-dwellers discussing abortion as an aid to romantic love, like the typist and her carbuncular seducer, are the personae of the early "Preludes" and the "Rhapsody On a Windy Night." "Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants C.i.f. London: documents at sight" is related to Phlebas the Phoenician, and the

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passage devoted to Phlebas is but a rendering into English of the last stanza of "Dans Le Restaurant." Tiresias, who has foreknown and foresuffered all, is akin to Gerontion and even to poor Prufrock ("For I have known them all already, known them all:—Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons"), even if he has not precisely measured out his life with coffee-spoons. In so different a poem as "Ash-Wednesday" we find the same figures recurring. The choruses for the religious pageant, *The Rock*, which make explicit much of what is suggested in a veiled fashion in "The Waste Land," brings in many of its elements. A single instance is the passage from "The Fire Sermon":

> The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,
> Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends
> Or other testimony of summer nights. The nymphs are departed.

This becomes

> O weariness of men who turn from GOD
> To the grandeur of your mind and the glory of your action,
> To arts and inventions and daring enterprises,
> To schemes of human greatness thoroughly discredited,
> Binding the earth and the water to your service,
> Exploiting the seas and developing the mountains,
> Dividing the stars into common and preferred,
> Engaged in devising the perfect refrigerator,
> Engaged in working out a rational morality,
> Engaged in printing as many books as possible,
> Plotting of happiness and flinging empty bottles . . .

The central symbol of drought is one that attracted Eliot when he began to write

> The reminiscence comes
> Of sunless dry geraniums
> And dust in crevices . . .

and that persists in his latest work

> So we moved, and they, in a formal pattern,
> Along the empty alley, into the box circle,

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To look down into the drained pool.
Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged . . .
And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,
The surface glittered out of heart of light
And they behind us, reflected in the pool.
Then a cloud passed, and the pool was empty.

At the close of "The Waste Land" the possibility of release is suggested in the fragments from the Buddhist Fire Sermon. The sermon declares that the soul must escape from the flames of greed, of hate and of infatuation before it can enter upon its peace. Again it is fire, the withering element, that symbolizes a threat to spiritual life. But the poem is memorable less for the promise of order and fulfillment hinted at in the Sanskrit reference than for its insistence on the desperate, burnt-out, fragmentary character of contemporary life, for its intimate, horrifying vision of impotence.

That vision persists in "The Hollow Men." But with this poem Eliot's work offers a fresh aspect. There is a never-before-heard music which is but the embodiment of a change of attitude that will become more evident in the later poems. Not even in "The Waste Land," which is exceptional for its tone-color and its sensitive rhythmic variations, is there such delicate weighting of syllables as here. And this hesitant tender melody, in the midst of a poem dealing sardonically enough with straw-brained paralytics, is testimony to a change of heart. Hatred of the mob, not so much of "the rank-scented many" as of the ubiquitous vulgarian, the parvenu, the man of straw, yields to a longing for the Divinity that the mob neither knows nor misses. In "Ash-Wednesday" and in the lyrics of the *Ariel* group the change is complete. The shuddering contempt of the world becomes a penitential seeking after God. The sense of sin paramount in "The Waste Land" is subordinated to the desire for salvation. The poet finds a not altogether satisfactory "objective correlative" for this attitude in *Family Reunion.*

Eliot likes to insist that a poet's beliefs are irrelevant to an

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appreciation of his poetry. But since the elucidation of poetry demands, among other things, an understanding of the poet's attitude to his subject and to his listener, one cannot avoid noticing that the feeling expressed in these later pieces and the tone that the poet takes differ markedly from what is revealed in earlier poems. There is, however, not so much a break as a transition.

The feeling expressed in Eliot's first poems was one of horror, and his tone was more or less contemptuous. The feeling expressed in the less depersonalized later work is one of yearning, and the tone is humble. The horror implied a sense of superiority, and it is not surprising that when Eliot turned to poetic drama he should have chosen the story of Thomas à Becket and made the play center upon the sin of pride. It is also noteworthy that the obscurity of his later poems seems less *voulu*, and is not so much due to the learned references that make his major work the despair of the ignorant and the not unmixed delight of the scholarly.

Eliot is less successful in expressing humility, and the old note of desperate scorn is heard again in the poems that followed "Ash-Wednesday." The two themes are transposed and counterpointed in the fragment, "Coriolan," and the choruses in *The Rock* contain didactic injunctions to brotherly love that lack the conviction of the renewed complaint:

> Our age is an age of moderate virtue
> And of moderate vice
> When men will not lay down the Cross
> Because they will never assume it.

The long piece which brings his *Collected Poems* to a close, "Burnt Norton," is a plea for the grace whereby "both a new world and the old" are to be

> made explicit, understood
> In the completion of its partial ecstasy,
> The resolution of its partial horror.

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The striving after grace is felt throughout the poem, which is rich in reminders of the final Cantos of the *Paradiso*. But, significantly, "the still point of the turning world" is lost sight of in the

> flicker
> Over the strained time-ridden faces
> Distracted from distraction by distraction
> Filled with fancies and empty of meaning
> Tumid apathy with no concentration
> Men and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind
> That blows before and after time,
> Wind in and out of unwholesome lungs
> Time before and time after.

We seem to be back again, if less vividly, in the world of the Preludes, where

> a gusty shower wraps
> The grimy scraps
> Of withered leaves about your feet
> And newspapers from vacant lots.

The tone of satire in which Eliot expressed his disgust with the contemporary world was congenial to a post-War generation. But the young men who followed that generation, though they find perhaps more cause for dismay, are not inclined to voice it in quite the same fashion. They too recognize the chaotic nature of a civilization in which the most delicate and complex instruments devised in the 20th century are made to serve a Stone Age sensibility. They too have lived through wars, though the formality of declaring a state of war may have been dispensed with. The boredom and the horror so present to Eliot are familiar to them also, but if they envisage glory it is of a different order. Oppressed though they may be by the heritage of the past, the terrors of the present, and the threat of the future, they are not, like so many of Eliot's personae, "unable to fare forward or retreat," and certainly they cannot recede with him into the arms of a Church that they find "blocking the sun." Indeed, Eliot's feelings and opinions have

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become a subject for satire, and his style good material for parody. This is oblique tribute to the skill with which he has set forth his feelings and opinions and to the positive character of his style.

But whatever the younger poets reject, their debt to Eliot is evident in their best work. It is to him, together with Ezra Pound, that we can trace the awareness of the urban scene, the employment of anti-poetic imagery, conversational rhythms, cinematic transitions and close-ups, which make contemporary verse deserve the adjective. And even the most vigorous and provocative of the younger men have not shown an "auditory imagination" equal to Eliot's.

He has himself defined this term as

> the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end. It works through meanings, certainly, or not without meanings in the ordinary sense, and fuses the old and obliterated and the trite, the current and the new and surprising, the most ancient and the most civilized mentality.

This definition is a description of Eliot's performance. What his "feeling for syllable and rhythm" has brought back, in its curious workings, has been chiefly a sense of disorder, of frustration and waste, an intimate and horrifying vision of death. It is not only the aggressive poets of the younger generation who reject Eliot's view of the necessity for evil in the scheme of things. But art that refuses to acknowledge its presence must fail to satisfy the honest agnostic and the sincere revolutionary equally with the believer in the doctrine of Original Sin. It is not impossible that a happier age will return to Eliot to renew the sense of death that gives a balance to life. In these tragic times there is a grim kind of consolation to be won in thus confronting the abyss.

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Political Creeds and Machiavellian Heresy

G. A. BORGESE

I

SEVEN pillars of wisdom, seven general propositions partaking on the whole of the nature of postulates, supported the political science of Antiquity as it developed from the early systematic attempts to the unified summary of Aristotle in his *Politics*.

The first of these postulates assumed that man is a political or social animal, no matter whether his gregarious instinct materializes in the family, in the group, in the city-state, or possibly in larger organisms.

The second postulate assumed that justice in human association is desirable.

The third stated the same desirability for freedom, no matter how the concepts of freedom and justice should be defined.

We shall call these three postulates the *constants* of political science. On the whole, and taking into account the conclusive and positive directions while discarding for a while the deviations and caprices, this triangle of fundamental political dogmas has never been challenged—from the time of Plato or Aristotle and earlier to very recent ages, or, more precisely, our own age.

We shall call the four following propositions the *variables* of political science. They had the authority of postulates in Aristotle, but underwent severe changes or outright subversions in the following centuries.

The fourth, first of the variables, or contingent propositions,

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stated that there are two sorts of men—slaves and freemen, barbarians and Greeks. The fifth proposition assumed that a state must be of a limited size since, to quote Aristotle's own words in chapter 4 of Book VII "as law is a certain order, so good law is of course a certain good order; but too large a multitude are incapable of this, unless under the government of that Divine Power which comprehends the universe." The sixth assumed that war, desirable or not, is inevitable. This can be considered as a corollary of the fifth rather than an independent postulate, since cities without a superior authority ordering their mutual relations are obviously exposed to mutual strife. In the seventh proposition Aristotle and his precursors, firmly anchored on this lovely planet, assumed that virtue finds its reward on earth.

Thus schematically outlined the background of classical speculation on politics seems more substantially significant than its well-known empirical tenets about the various forms of government—monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy, democracy —with their advantages and drawbacks, improvements and decadences. Such tenets and descriptions indeed belong to that field of empirical operations which finds in Antiquity its counterpart in the definition and description of literary genera and in the paradigms of grammar and metrics. The fundamental propositions as worded above disclose instead the inner drive of political feelings and thinking in much the same way as an analysis of Greek taste and patterns should take us farther into the understanding of Greek esthetics than a mere word-by-word repetition of the empirical rules and norms as the ancients wrote them down.

The shift of the variable postulates which followed in the ages after Aristotle's death and the collapse of the original Greek culture and its spread over the Hellenistic and Roman-Hellenistic world, was at first slow and half-conscious. In a book like Cicero's *Republic* the change is rather in the proportions and in the emotional temper than in the precise theoretical

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formulations. Later on the new conditions of society and culture, the altered desires and purposes of the human heart, were bound to impinge on that proto-classical building more and more effectively in spite of all apparent and conscious fidelity to the inherited scheme.

2

Apart from the influences of humanitarianism and universalism as they developed in post-Aristotelian schools and especially in Stoicism, an irretrievable event in world history exercised a voiding action on postulate five. Xenophon, while picturing in Cyrus the ideal portrait of the perfect ruler, had managed, however strangely, to evade the problem of the large empire as opposed to the city-state. Aristotle, the wisest of men, had not been wise enough to visualize what his little pupil Alexander the Great was doing in the years in which he meditated and wrote the *Politics*. Blind to history in the making, he still ignored, as a manifestation of barbarism, the large empire and kept on praising, as the most perfect form of social organization, the imperishable life of the Greek city-state, which lay dead near him. But after the blending of Greece into the Persian and Egyptian-Hellenistic world of Alexander and his successors, and especially after the fulfillment through Rome of the synthesis of the Western city-state and the Oriental schemes of a unified empire, the change was inevitably bound to become visible. Already in Cicero's day the word "Imperium" has a different, emotion-laden sound, and the lapidary lines of Vergil in which the new unitary theory is formulated are familiar to the ear and heart of everyone.

The fourth postulate—that there are two sorts of men—suffered the same fate as the fifth, for reasons partly similar and partly additional. Clearly enough the most effective of all was the spread of Christianity, which in turn had been preceded, although in a narrow sphere of influence, by the Jewish prophetic tradition claiming justice for all men and not only for a privileged class or race, and extending messianically the in-

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fluence of Israel to a unitary world, the mirror of God's kingdom or empire. Tenets like the Pauline that there are neither Jews nor Gentiles, and the inescapable objection of Christianity to the institution of slavery (however slavery might be for the time being practically countenanced by the Church itself), combined with the drive toward a fusion of races and classes implicit in the program of the Roman World Empire, to make at least theoretically and juridically all men citizens. The ideal of the Pax Romana, which to some extent and for some time was a fact—made of peace not only a desideratum, as it had been long before Aristotle in the old Homer himself, but also a possibility, thus annulling the validity of the sixth postulate about the inevitability of war.

Finally the philosophic dogma according to which virtue, represented by the four Aristotelian cardinal virtues, finds its reward on earth was superseded by the dogma of reward hereafter. The eternal Laws which the "Laws of the City" in Plato's *Criton* call "our brethren the Laws of the world below" claimed authority also over the world above, and the pages of St. Augustine on the inequality of Fortune in temporal life stressed the contrast of eternity and time far more intensely than the Dream of Scipio and other passages of Cicero's *Republic*.

Under the double effect of world unity and the Christian religion one theory alone ought to have developed in political science if the corollaries from the ancient postulates had been deduced with absolute rigor. This one political theory should have been the theory of hierocracy, of the unitary world empire under the rule of the philosopher-king or philosopher-emperor or saintly chief guide of all mankind both in the spiritual and in the temporal—which latter cannot but be considered a step to and condition for eternal bliss. Obviously this perfect society and its perfect chief should have been the Christian Church and its Holy Father, the Pope. All vital elements of Antiquity from the prophetic Christian inspiration to the Aristotelian norm were driven to meet in an ideal superstate, at once absolutistic, aristocratic, and democratic, projecting on the large meta-

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physical scale of the community of the saints the ideal monarchical Republic of Plato.

3

It took several centuries from the Edict of Milan in 313 to the great popes of the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries for the shape of this *perfecta societas* to find an adequate formulation. The delay was due to the resistance of daily happenings and of inherited mental habits rather than to theoretical difficulties. Popes like Gelasius I in the 5th century still clung to separate spheres of influence for the two powers, the spiritual and the temporal, thus making permanent and substantial a contrast which in the Christian belief was only temporary and instrumental. Nor was such dualism definitely abandoned until the time of the proclamations about the *plenitudo potestatis* from, say, Gregory VII (1073-1085) to at least Innocent III (1198-1216).

It is, however, an irony of history that while the doctrine of the Christian-Roman world empire was attaining completion the resistances of political reality was becoming more and more stubborn and at a strikingly commensurate ratio. As a matter of fact the Christian Church never succeeded in embodying the continuity of the temporal world empire of Rome except in a crippled stump, or as a kind of ectoplasmic ghost, like the Pontifical state in and around the decayed city of Rome. It did not even succeed in preserving under its spiritual rule the boundaries of the ancient Roman Empire. It lost the East, it lost Asia, it lost Africa. The disproportion between the hugeness of the theoretical claim and the limits of the actual circumstances was bound to break the ambition of the system. Under repeated blows from the German Emperors, in their rebellious moods, from the unruliness of the Western Kings, from the lawlessness of the Communes and principalities, the superb building lay a heap of ruins to be contemplated from the battered throne of Boniface VIII (1294-1303).

Yet the hierocratic unity, the world empire ruled directly or

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through delegation by the One appointee of God—this was the only legitimate inference from the postulates of medieval Christian political science. St. Thomas himself, for all his cautious, almost realistic, prudence in dealing with things and events as they were under his eyes, while admitting the plurality of cities, principalities and kingdoms, did not even try to escape the implication contained in all Christian theories about the City of Man and the City of God as foreshadowed already in the very first sentences of the Lord's Prayer. The words in which he states the superiority of the Roman Pontiff over all earthly rulers have not a flaw nor a rift through which theoretical or practical dissent could intrude.

It was the early part of the 14th century, in the combined wake of Pope Boniface's and Emperor Henry's defeats, which with increasing awareness shook the foundations of medieval unity. Whatever the subtlety of the argument, however unimpeachable his faith in the preservation and harmony of his society, Dante's *Monarchia* remains unwittingly an advance proclamation of Renaissance and Reformation. The parallel authority of the temporal (represented by the Emperor or Eagle) and of the eternal (represented by the Pope or the Cross) is untenable and disruptive if tested on the basic beliefs of Christian Catholic unity. The final homage which Dante's Emperor pays to the Pope as a son to his father is lipservice, insufficient to restore the forsaken unity. Marsilio of Padua's *Defensor pacis*, written and published immediately afterwards, added temerity to the courage, confusion to the innovation. The laity becomes paramount, the Pope is a usurper, the universal empire both temporal and spiritual is little more than a double nominal shadow over the rank fertility and multiplicity of the natural, juridical, popular, fragmentary societies, now fully admitted into the frame of political theory as they had been long since in the stream of living actuality.

4

What had happened on the eve of the Renaissance to the

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four contingent postulates of classical political science and to the modified shapes they had assumed in the culminating phase of medieval speculation? The answer can state only the trends. Nobody questioned the theoretical equality of all men before God and the law. Here in the field of the fourth postulate the continuity from medieval science to the most recent speculation remained unbroken. But, in what concerns the fifth and sixth postulates, there was more than a trend in Marsilio and his successors to assuming again that a city must be of a definite size and therefore increasingly to believing again that war is inevitable. There also was a trend, noticeable in the undercurrents of Dante's emotionalism, to believing again that, although it is not necessarily true that virtue finds its reward on earth, temporal life is immensely important and terrestrial happiness utterly desirable.

Nevertheless beneath all variations, shifts and even revolutions the first three basic postulates persisted adamant. Man is a political animal. Justice is desirable. Freedom is desirable. And all structures, pre-Aristotelian, post-Aristotelian, medieval, post-medieval, remained compact within the limits of the final equation as formulated in the first chapter of the seventh book of Aristotle's *Politics*: "He who proposes to make that inquiry which is necessary concerning what government is best ought first to determine what manner of living is most desirable. . . . That city is happiest which is the best and acts best." In a "life of virtue, accompanied with those enjoyments which virtue usually procures" the convergence and final coincidence of virtue and statesmanship, of ethics and politics, enlarged and projected by the medieval man into the complementary concepts of City of Man and City of God, had been unflinchingly upheld by all leading theorists and teachers, pagan and Jew, Greek and Roman, medieval and Christian, Plato or Augustine, Aristotle or Dante, Cicero or Thomas, Marsilio or Occam.

5

To be sure there had been others besides the leading theorists

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in Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

Under the apparent unanimity upholding the fundamental postulates of politics and crowning them all with the assertion of the convergence of politics and ethics, strong undercurrents had been aware (especially in Antiquity) of the existence of untamable or untamed forces, of a sheer drive to power, of an element of delusion in the assumption that religious virtue and successful statesmanship ought to and can coincide.

This riotous, cynical extreme Left or extreme Right of political thinking is represented in various ways by early poets and moralists. Practically all of the *Odyssey* and much of the *Iliad* itself center around the unsolved struggle between the qualities of ethical loyalty embodied in magnanimous strength and the subtle, however perhaps reprehensible, performances of trained intelligence. Against the background of the sacred kingly power as mirrored more or less adequately in the prestige of Agamemnon and the heroic simplicity of an Achilles, Ulysses rises, the man of many wiles, the pre-Machiavellian. Homer himself seems at times amusedly yet helplessly entangled in the ethico-political antinomy, anxious to applaud the pure hero and the immaculate sage, but also ready to applaud the tricks and deceits of the fighter and wanderer, versed both in the challenge of valor and in the practice of unscrupulous shrewdness.

We shall not enlarge on the well-known perplexity of the tragic and lyrical poets. In Sophocles' play *Philoctetes* the naive sufferer is morally excellent, but from a merely social and statesmanlike point of view the cunning, purposeful, planning, almost merciless Ulysses is preferred by gods and fate. All feelings seem to incline towards the purer side, while the cold mind seems to acknowledge the superior weight of more intricate forces. A famous instance is in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, where the theory, plainly pre-Machiavellian or pre-jesuitical, of mental reservation in taking an oath rises before the spectator with a dangerous lure. On the whole, the phenomenon is observable in the dawn of all great cultural civilizations, that

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intelligence, the fine, the clever, the tortuous, the ironical, the treacherous, exercises on the adolescent group an almost irresistible and implicitly perilous spell. The statement can be easily transferred to any field of individual or collective experiences. Intelligence, as soon as it becomes aware of itself, idolizes itself. It is assumed to be lovely and admirable for its own sake, and even the child does not learn to lie only to shun a grief or to grasp a pleasure. It lies also for the sheer pleasure of lying—of sharpening the tools of creative and destructive intelligence and of testing their edges against the resistance of reality.

Therefore trick, lie, treason have so large a share in popular primitive imagination, witness the many folk-tales in which they represent the more human implements of man in contrast with the brutishness of mere strength or the simplicity of idiocy as found both in the pre-human world of nature and in the sub-human world of barbarism. An extremely striking growth in the field of political or pre-political speculation, midway between the elemental imagination of popular tales and the achievements of dialectical sophistry, is the Aesopic and post-Aesopic fable. There the animal world is pictured as a kind of hypostasis of the human world with the subdued and yet clear purpose of showing that nature is perennial and untamable, however the moral and religious man may play with his glorious, stultifying words.

The Aesopic theory, a political science *in nuce* and a superbly organized syllabus of unprejudiced contemplation of human affairs, pivots around a small group of leading characters. Prominent among them are the lion and the fox, the Achilles and the Ulysses of this small huge world, the former a symbol of that unbeatable direct strength which alone can allow to itself the luxury of virtues like generosity, truthfulness, nay even compassion; the latter the symbol of intellectual subtlety and ruthless intrigue which make up for the comparative lack of muscular and dental imperium. It is strangely remarkable that both the legendary collector and the historical beautifier of

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this political animal epic, Aesop the Phrygian-Greek, and Phaedrus the Macedonian-Roman, were of the species of the foxes rather than of the lions. They both were underdogs, slaves, freedmen, sufferers, victims, tried too hard by the enmity of life to believe in the highflung tenets of optimistic and utopian speculation. All that they said boiled down to the one dogma that force rules the world and where force is not available in plenty, cunning should take its place, a counterfeit or substitute for force.

That is what the sophists thought they knew very well. Thrasymachus, the arch-opponent of Socrates in Plato's *Republic*, is as advanced as to contend that "justice is simply the interest of the stronger" and that, if the duty of justice is impressed upon children, this is not in order "to praise justice itself, but only for the respectability which it gives." Nay, he goes so far as to uphold in an excursus of unparalleled boldness that not only is the unjust in a better situation to enjoy his earthly life but also he has better means to woo the favor of the gods. The passage in Thucydides where the Athenians teach the helpless Melians a more than Machiavellian political doctrine is too celebrated and too actual to be quoted here and now.[1] It certainly was familiar in some direct or indirect way to Thrasymachus himself. Neither was Aristotle so naive as not to take into account the teachings of those according to whom the only inspiration of politics is "to conquer and govern" the world (*Politics*, Book VII, chapter 2). He discarded this view, yet he knew that theoretically an art of tyranny, a set of rules for a tyrant to maintain his power, could be formulated (*Politics*, Book V, chapter 11). Neither did he shrink from the assertion, however occasional, that "the wickedness of mankind is insatiable" (*Politics*, Book II, chapter 7), a Thrasymachian or pre-Machiavellian tenet which, had Aristotle insisted on it rather than on his pillars of wisdom, would have thoroughly

[1] See e.g. Archibald MacLeish's "Thucydides in Prague" (the *Nation*, October 8, 1938) with the Czechs, the Nazis, and the British playing the roles of the Melians, the Athenians and the Lacedaemonians in Thucydides' fifth Book.

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subverted his politico-ethical system. But he insisted rather on his pillars of wisdom. Almost three centuries later, the subversive or anarchical point of view which implicitly or explicitly inspired the fabulist and the sophists was amply unfolded by Philus and Carneades in Cicero's *Republic*. But sternly and sapiently Cicero did away with it, and his political system reached its climax in the monumental figure of Scipio, the *kalokagathos*, the Beautiful-Good.

All this may be summarized in the statement that a political theory of mere power, whether force or cunning or both, was anything but unknown to the ancients. It was, however, crushingly overwhelmed by the Socratic and post-Socratic unitary speculation. The Middle Ages developed and unified farther the post-Socratic speculation, cementing its principles with the Christian dogma.

6

Whether after the shocks which the classical-medieval structure of political theory suffered at the hands of Dante, Marsilio and the others Niccolò Machiavelli can be rightly considered as either the founder of a modern political science or at least as the remorseless destroyer of the system that had prevailed for nearly 2000 years, is not fully relevant. We all are subject to the fashion of crystallizing long developments and fated changes around short dates and wilful personalities. Such personalities can in any case be considered as symbolic of the events. Even if we came to the conclusion that too much has been ascribed to Machiavelli that is not his own and that the descriptions of his thinking usually given both by admirers and detractors are inaccurate, he still would remain as a significant, a spectacular landmark. The Renaissance produced a mythical cycle no less symbolically expressive than Greek or Christian or Carolingian or Arthurian cycles had been. It does not matter very much whether the intellectual and scientific tendencies of the new mankind should be really attributed to the exertions of a certain Dr. Faustus who lived as a necromancer and magician

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somewhere in Germany sometime in the Renaissance. Obviously they cannot be attributed personally to him. Yet everybody knows what Faust and Faustism mean. In analogy nobody cares very much to inquire how much is factually true in the astonishing love career of another Renaissance mythical hero, Don Juan. Yet everybody knows what Don Juan and Don Juanism stand for. In the mythological cycle of the Renaissance there are Germans like Faust, there are Spaniards like Don Juan and Don Carlos, there are Dutch like Egmont, English or Scots like Mary of Scotland. There also are Italians; visibly overtowering all others and looming even larger than Leonardo himself, Machiavelli. Whatever his actual career, whatever the objective substance of his work, everybody knows or feels what Machiavelli and Machiavellism ideally mean. This knowledge can hardly change. Nor is there any point in changing it. Here, as in so many other cases of history, we have a mediocre biography, a contradictory and fragmentary work, both of them interpreted, systematized and magnified under the all-pervading light of a proverbial or mythological knowledge, which is knowledge of some sort. As an historical person Machiavelli too, like his extraordinary forerunners, the Aesopic fabulists, belonged to the species of the underdog. His life is an uninterrupted crescendo of frustrations with each and all of his ambitions and purposes flouted by a relentlessly ironic reality, with his statesmanship confined to a backstair room in the Palazzo Vecchio, with his military genius applied to the trivialities of a Pisan War and, if the story is true, to an unsuccessful display in the art of parading on the Square of Milan; with prison and torture, although not so long and so final as to reach the proportions of heroic martyrdom; with a wearisome, monotonous, inconclusive struggle between poverty and mere decent living, between vulgar pleasure and leaden melancholy, between obscurity and occasional fortuitous praise. His temperament, both stifled and stung, reacted with doubled sarcasm to the sarcasm of the historic environment. Hence the development of his artistic genius, supremely comic, if we include in

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the word "comic" a grimness bordering on a barren tragedy despoiled of catharsis. Some traits of this devastated and devastating humor were forced on him without any voluntary collaboration of his. Most appalling the *contradictio temporum* by which the Medicis returned to Florence when Machiavelli had built his nest in the Republic and the Republic came up again when Machiavelli through many toilsome and debased years had finally managed to win the favor of the Medicis again.

Other traits, however, were of his own making. Most amusing the delusion that inspired him to dedicate his heroic *Prince* to a poor offspring of the Medici family, Lorenzo, the arch-usurper of glory in all ages who, besides strutting with the epithet Il Magnifico borrowed from a grandfather much bigger than he, was also honored with a funereal monument decorated by Michelangelo with masterpieces no less heroic than the unhappy Machiavelli's Prince. Most dramatic of all such traits the choice which he made between the two heroes of his formative years, Savonarola, ruler of Florence from 1494-1498, and Cesare Borgia, running amok throughout Central Italy all the following four or five years. Harmlessly but hopelessly misled by his twisted imagination, Machiavelli preferred to the friar, a Christian and somehow a Christ, Cesare Borgia, a brigand, a Barabbas. Not even the standard of success could justify the perversion, since the petty Cesare was even more of a failure than the martyr, whose spirit arose again shortly after the death of Machiavelli in the short three years of the last Florentine Republic, 1527-1530, crowning three centuries of glory at least with a death agony of adequate beauty. Verily the record of Machiavelli as a realistic prophet and an active statesman is utterly discouraging.

Like the legendary Aesop and the historical Phaedrus he was practically a slave, a freedman never really free, a harassed shadow of power and achievement, scurrying along the margins of a forbidden society; to repeat, he was of the class of the underdog. Hence his admiration for foxlike deeds and foxlike

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natures, his envy for those among the foxes who did not have their tails caught in the jaws of the trap. Hence his subversion of the standards set by medieval ethics and medieval poetry; not only his hatred of the Roman Church and of the all-too-objectionable Pontiffs of his age but also his contempt for Christianity itself, worded in sentences anticipating Nietzsche, and his sophistical reversal of the world of Dante, which he grudgingly admired and bitterly loathed. If Dante pressed towards the bottom of Hell Guido da Montefaltro, who taught Boniface VIII how to cheat and to betray the enemy with a promise never to be fulfilled and in so doing squarely and unqualifiedly doomed one whose "works were foxlike rather than leonine," it is on the contrary the intellectual competence of the fox that most thrilled the Renaissance observer, seriously convinced (e.g. in the *Life of Castruccio*) that there is no point in winning through strength whenever there is an opportunity of winning through fraud. If in the following Dantean canto, Inferno XXVIII, Mosca de' Lamberti is pressed deeper towards the bottom of Hell because of his famous motto, "*Cosa fatto capo ha*" (a thing done is done away with) which started murder and civil strife in Florence, this is precisely what floods with enthusiasm Machiavelli's knowing mind: the doctrine that *cosa fatto capo ha* and that the enemy must be either caressed or extinguished.

7

It was said that Greek tragedy arose out of the spirit of music. In analogous ways, supposing that Machiavelli can or must be considered as the father of modern political theory, we can uphold the thesis that this political theory arose out of the spirit of literature. The classical and medieval tradition of the Aesopic fable; the splendid vigor of the hell of human passion and endeavor as represented by Dante with colors that made the world of the damned far preferable for Machiavelli to a dull Paradise, fit, as he is supposed to have said, for cripples and beggars; finally the beaming satisfaction with which Boccaccio had represented the triumph of wit over ignorance or brute

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force, making heroes even of Buffalmacco and Bruno at the expense of the poor wretch Calandrino—all these and other such elements of Machiavelli's imagination contributed far more substantially to the shaping of his theoretic and historical system than most of the cursory, dubious, often irrelevant references in his works to masters of political science in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages, whether Aristotle, Livy, or Tacitus, to whom he is more or less directly related, or Saint Thomas and the other doctors whom he is more or less aware of contradicting.

8

The real forerunners if any, in the strict theoretic field of political science, were the sophists of Ancient Greece, the Athenians of the dialogue of Thucydides or, to pronounce the most symbolic name, the Thrasymachus of Plato's *Republic.* From a certain angle what really happened in this triumph of the spirit of the Renaissance was that the theory of the sophists took the upper hand. What for so many centuries had been the undercurrent of Western philosophy in things political became the current, the visible direction of the stream. The intellectual revolution broke dazzlingly and obstreperously into view in the unprecedented fact that a political theorist at last chose as permanent pattern a villain, the Borgia, lifting him to a pedestal higher than any Cyrus or Solon. The advantages of the change were obvious. The descriptions of human characters, intentions and doings acquired a dry, however limited, visibility and exactitude in which the performance of Machiavelli as a story-teller shines in contours and features actually as inspired in insight and as flawless in technique as to compete with the most Leonardesque of Leonardo's drawings. The general remarks about humankind and interpersonal and international relations with which his books and short writings teem are as impressive in their approximate truthfulness as other such remarks in the writings of the moralists and diarists of the following ages. On this branch of his pedigree Machiavelli, an offspring of the

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fabulists and of the sophists, is a close relative or a direct ancestor of writers like Guicciardini, La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère and all their kin. On the other hand, opposite to the advantages and less known than they, are the shortcomings that make of Machiavelli's theory rather the demolition of all political theory than the foundation of a new one.

Whosoever should try to organize his tenets in a rational order would see how untenable they are; all their worth and meaning boil down more or less to the validity of proverbs and familiar quotations, equally truthful, partial and contradictory. Whosoever should test the structure of the rational basis which he laid or presupposed under the building of his system (assuming there is such a thing as a Machiavellian system) would realize that this basis consists of the single assumption that only force and cunning, actual violence and intellectual snare are the effective factors of human action. Thus he showed how the merely political elements of action, later to be called "will to power," could be isolated and studied apart from all other ingredients. It was a laboratory experiment, amazingly interesting but unspeakably invalid as an account of any real reality. Ruskin shortly after the middle of the 19th century, describing "the modern *soi-disant* science of political economy," used the following words:

> Observe, I neither impugn nor doubt the conclusion of the science if its terms are accepted. I am simply uninterested in them, as I should be in those of a science of gymnastics which assumed that men had no skeletons. It might be shown on that supposition, that it would be advantageous to roll the students up into pellets, flatten them into cakes, or stretch them into cables. . . . The reasoning might be admirable, the conclusions true, and the science deficient only in applicability.

Ruskin's words about a political economy isolating the economic factor from all other physical and spiritual coefficients can be immediately transferred to any political science of the Machiavellian and post-Machiavellian brand. It is a science that would work admirably if its subject-matter existed anywhere in heaven or on earth. It does not exist anywhere. As it is true that

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the potential of intelligence and cleverness, the foxlike element of action, modifies and qualifies the sovereignty of physical force, it is equally true that moral convictions and purpose introduce a third factor endowed with a potential of its own. This third potential is as real as the two former, wrongly visioned as the two only essences of Realpolitik, and inescapably modifies them both.

The omission, logically and psychologically unwarranted, of this third component of reality digs a hole at the very basic center of the Machiavellian structure. The pinnacle of the structure is surmounted by the image of Fortune, a deity of superstition in which neither Machiavelli nor anybody else could actually believe, a symbolical name for all that the political scientist or the historian is unable to explain or even merely to report. This deity might as well be called Providence or the Will of God, or Immanent Justice, or History, or Destiny, or Probability, or Average, or Chance or Nothing or All. Thus if the primal element of Machiavellian speculation consists of a logical gap, the last and conclusive one is little more than a metaphorical flourish, stating in half-thrilled, half-distressed awe how really inscrutable the world of man's reality is and remains in spite of all realistic analysis.

9

It seems, therefore, that the final import of Machiavelli's intervention in the history of political theory consists in the disintegration of the system of postulates which the ancients had established and which the Middle Ages had further integrated in a more compact though less adjustable order. If we return to those seven pillars of political wisdom and try to look at them as they appeared after the Machiavellian revolution we find very strange words inscribed on them.

The first postulate repeats that man is a political animal adding, however, that his only way of living in society is under the sovereignty of the state: a sovereignty deduced neither from the people nor from God but from the state alone.

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The second maintains that justice is desirable, changing however the indicative mood into the conditional and stating that justice would be desirable if it were attainable. The third states that freedom also is desirable, though it is difficult to achieve and almost impossible to preserve.

The fourth does not go back, as yet, to the ancient assumption that there are two sorts of men, free and slaves, Greeks (or Romans, or Aryans) and barbarians. It may even admit that fundamentally men are born equal provided we recognize that one's fellow countrymen are the real equals, not the strangers; or that only armed men are real men, not the unarmed ones; the victors, not the vanquished.

The fifth asserts that a city must not be of any definite size. Any size, kingdom or principality or city-state as the earthquakes and avalanches of history are heaping or splitting them, is equally good or bad. The ideal shape would be the ancient city-state; its resurrection, however, is as improbable as it is desirable. The unity of mankind in Empire, or Church or Empire-Church is as improbable, nay fantastic, as it is on the whole undesirable.

The sixth not only repeats, with a return to Antiquity, that war is inevitable but by and by it suggests that war is beautiful and desirable.

The seventh denies that virtue finds its reward anywhere but on earth. Neither has virtue any serious claim to finding reward on earth unless we modify the meaning of the word virtue, transmuting its old-fashioned implications of justice and wisdom into exclusive implications of energy and valor. Even if we perform this transmutation it is not at all sure that this kind of virtue will find a reward on earth unless Fortune endorses it. Fortune is a mystery.

The final convergence of virtue as saintliness and statesmanship is thoroughly nullified. Human history has no meaning and no goal. Its secret is only the expansion of desire, later to be called power, *Macht*, the adventurous fruit of Machiavellian virtue. If the results of the expansive desire are fortunate and

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lasting, a sort of artistic beauty accrues to them: an exemplary prince or a tyrant, an acquisitive or a prosperous kingdom, a fighting and robust Republic, shine equally like perfect patterns, in the same way as well-proportioned statues or harmonious edifices enjoyed by the connoisseur apart from any intrinsic value except the vitality of esthetic adequacy.

While consciously and even conscientiously striving to imitate the rules or alleged rules of Antiquity, the spirit of the Renaissance involuntarily but ruthlessly demolished them all.

In poetry and in the arts a punctilious and even servile obedience to the external catechism of Greek or Roman poetry and art did not prevent the man of the Renaissance from opening half asleep the gates to a most disorderly pre-Romanticism. In political theory the meticulous care with which Machiavelli and the other disciples of classicism analyzed the concepts of aristocracy, monarchy, democracy, oligarchy—parallel to tragedy, epic, comedy, satire and so forth in the literary genera—did not keep them from blazing the trail towards the Romantic political theory of power, whose climaxes and manifold catastrophes we have the privilege of contemplating in our days.

10

How far men went in the following four centuries along the trail to which Machiavelli almost unwittingly had led them, such names and slogans—to mention only a few of the most recent—as Fichte and Hegel, as Marx and Nietzsche, as Nationalism and Communism, as Fascism and Nazism, tell plainly by themselves. All the postulates are now broken columns. Nietzsche tried to wreck even the first, the steadiest of all. He tried to prove to himself that man, not even necessarily a political animal, can stand alone.

Today it is finally stated that Justice and Freedom are neither possible nor desirable and that Justice is in the old words of Thrasymachus the interest of the stronger. It is stated again that there are two sorts of men. They may be the Aryan and the Jew, the Roman and the barbarian, the native and the alien, the

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white and the colored, the capitalist and the proletarian, the proletarian and the bourgeois; they are at any rate the warrior and the serf, the winner and the defeated. It is stated that a city must be of an indefinite size and that the tyrant must aspire to world empire. It is stressed that war is inevitable and desirable and beautiful. There is no virtue except energy and power. Power finds its reward neither on earth nor in heaven but in its own explosion alone. There is no convergence between ethical wisdom and statesmanship. For some of the theories prevailing today, happiness and wisdom are a mirage cherished at unchangeable distance across permanent misery and hatred. For other theories statesmanship is frenzy perennial.

The hope for the restoration of our world to acceptable standards still seems slight and dim. It does not seem to be possible in any way other than by a return to the basic postulates as we listed them above; as Antiquity first drafted them provisionally and as the Middle Ages attempted to integrate them more logically however less flexibly. The attempt of the Middle Ages crumbled under the weight of a political and social reality which broke a fancied unity into arbitrary fragments, and in the ruins of a theocracy unable to confront the challenge of rationality and science. The last among the doctors of the Middle Ages, especially Dante and Marsilio, already, although more or less unwillingly, sensed that they were living in a split world. The Renaissance *sub specie* Machiavelli acknowledged the accomplished fact. If the Middle Ages had built a syntax of political theory without an adequate morphology, the Renaissance replaced the structure with an assemblage of material, later called Realpolitik, a morphology without a syntax. We are visibly living at the end of the era which we call Renaissance.

The words of the future are World Federation which alone can make a reality of the mirage of World Empire; justice and peace, with freedom in the service of justice and peace; convergence, nay, unity of ethical wisdom and active statesmanship in the spirit of a wholly rational and universal religious belief.

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Men Reading

New York Public Library

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

In this tremendous quiet hall men can read Plato
With a week's beard. The taxpayers built this place,
This squat marble gesture to learning under commodity's spear-spires,
This unexpected place in the island. The people read.

The people read, yes.
Fierce eyes, bushy hair reads Hegel.
Disappointed eyes, lined face reads Pitkin.
Young lipsticked lips murmur maxims from a business manual.
Thinkers without substance or the higher education feed their thought,
Often arrive at terrible conclusions.

Seeing this, why should I for instance go
(My own integrity having been established)
To a room apart and guarded to examine a poet's Swinburnian oats
(He is socially conscious now) in a volume very rare?

For when Caesar was in Alexandria there was street-fighting
And the Library got burned during the manoeuvrings of Order and Liberty:
Scholars still complain of it.

And when Pound was in the Midi and a war was going on elsewhere
He called them unwise to fight for an old bitch civilization, a few dozen battered books:
An expert opinion which had no political effect whatsoever.

And unless we are still too gentle and too wise
Is it not well that now we speak, bear arms?

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Is "American Balkanization" Unavoidable?

Critical Remarks on Interstate Tariffs

FRITZ KARL MANN

WE, IN the United States today, are confronted with an astonishing situation: although this country developed its economic resources by abolishing old boundaries between the Thirteen Colonies and by extending its domestic market over the largest area ever reached by any nation, it is now abrogating this achievement in a systematic way. Between the states new economic frontiers are being erected. Is it exaggeration or fact that the United States is being gradually transformed into 48 "Balkan kingdoms"?

We are faced of course with a cluster of state provisions, mainly of recent origin, which aim at directly or indirectly protecting intrastate commerce against "foreign," but American, competition. Sometimes we feel that we are being carried back to medieval policies that aimed at self-sufficiency by building insurmountable custom-walls around cities as well as territories. Sometimes, however, interesting detours are followed. Since protective tariffs clash with constitutional or legal obstacles, other institutions were devised which, although very much resembling custom-duties, were not suspected of illegality. The shift in the tools and techniques used even led many naive observers to believe that, in a few cases, motives other than protection were involved. Nevertheless, if we pierce a thin veil of legal construction, we become aware that such different devices as registration fees and ton-mile taxes for motorists, taxes on oleomargarine, beer, cigarettes, candy, ice-cream, cosmetics and gasoline, the so-called use tax, ports-of-entry laws, labeling and grading provisions etc. are but varying means to achieve an

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unvarying economic end. Although starting from different points, all strive to circumvent the enemy, legal restrictions.

It does not seem worth while, at least in the course of a short critical analysis, to explore the procedures and the legal tricks characterizing all the devices now in operation. What we wish to know are their general characteristics, the alleged or real need for erecting new trade barriers, the achievements of this isolationist policy in the past and its probable effects in the future. Obviously it would not be enough to base our conclusions on the unfortunate role played by similar devices throughout the many centuries of economic history, for people may object that social and economic conditions have changed fundamentally and that therefore an old stratagem might work in a new way.

In the main, the motive behind tariffs is identical for interstate and foreign trade: they are levied to compensate for an inequality of wealth, natural resources and technical equipment. Free competition not only perpetuates but intensifies these inequalities. It favors the stronger and handicaps the weaker. For this reason Great Britain fervently advocated free-trade programs during the latter part of the 19th century. Free trade, on the contrary, may become obnoxious to a country lagging behind its rivals in the development of agriculture, commerce and industry.

However, a compromise has been suggested. It seems appropriate to grant temporary custom-duties to infant industries and to discontinue them as soon as those industries have become adults. Putting it in a general way, protection should be used only as a provisional device, with free trade remaining the ultimate goal. This well-known theory, first expounded a century ago by the great German-American, Friedrich List, and still adhered to by many nations suffers chiefly from a psychological error. It did not realize that the leaders of young industries are seldom too proud to be treated as infants the whole of their lives. They prefer state protection or monopoly to a system of "perfect competition" and the temporary help tends to become permanent.

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These considerations may easily be applied to the issue of interstate tariffs. If our industry were equally spread over the whole of the United States; if the ingenuity of the entrepreneurs and technicians and the skill of the workers were everywhere at the same level; if the demand for commodities and in fashions were uniform; if wages, interest rates, rent, cost of transportation and taxes were equalized it would be difficult to urge any protection for "native" industries. Not so under present-day conditions. Whether the protectionists hope that the tariffs granted them will cease when the privileged industries are of age and strong enough to compete with "foreign" rivals, or realize from the outset that a full equalization of the cost structure is so utopian that protection and prohibition will become permanent institutions, it is hard to decide.

For fiscal reasons many men support the erection of interstate tariffs. There is certainly no doubt about the desirability of blocking the avenues to tax avoidance. But it remains to be seen whether this objective outweighs factors that are economically disadvantageous. Other fiscal experts refer to the need to increase revenue. But for reasons which I shall discuss later the yield from interstate tariffs is supposed to be only modest.

Those who advocate "economic sectionalism" may even admit at times that it has an unfortunate effect on production. It is an old experience that the decomposition of a large industrial market generally tends to increase the cost of production and to raise the price level, and hence to curtail the volume of trade and reduce the ability to export to foreign countries. This makes it all the more interesting that the isolationist policy has occasionally been recommended from another point of view—one which asserts that isolationism's true goal is not so much protection of producers as protection of consumers. An impressive instance is offered by the grading, packaging and labeling legislation which, recently, has grown up with tremendous multiplicity, chiefly with reference to farm products like fruits, vegetables, milk, cream, butter, cheese etc. In a few cases the

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public health policy fits easily into the framework of protective devices. Needless to say, grading eggs and labeling "fresh eggs" may prevent consumers from buying products of inferior quality. If, however, fresh eggs are defined as only those eggs laid within the state, no matter how fresh imported eggs may be, the provision works as well as a custom-duty. The same holds true with respect to various dairy laws providing for inspection, licensing and registration. Sometimes, however, as in the case of oleomargarine, considerations of public health are only incidental. The many regulations concerning its labeling, sale, serving and taxing are, first of all, a tool for stimulating the sale of "native" butter. In dairy laws, also, we frequently meet with regulations whose predominant objective is the protection of the producer. In Indiana it is unlawful to sell milk purchased outside the state if its price is lower than the domestic. Florida prohibits the mixing of domestic milk with any milk imported from other states. The trade barriers erected on behalf of the "domestic" liquor industry excel in the variety of devices used to protect it. We can distinguish at least four types:

1. Export encouraged by granting privileges in taxation. Alcoholic beverages, produced for "export," are either favored by a lower rate or are tax free.
2. Import hampered by charging additional fees for "foreign" alcoholic beverages, or fees higher than for their "domestic" equivalents. This amounts, of course, to a concealed custom-duty.
3. License fees reduced on behalf of those manufacturers who use local products.
4. Beverage importers and dealers required to maintain a place of business in the state in order to avoid a considerably higher annual fee.[1]

No group of interstate barriers has developed more rapidly during recent years than interstate tariffs disguised as taxes on articles transported across state lines. If a commercial motorist with an out-of-state license is stopped at the "port-of-entry"

[1] See *Comparative Charts of State Statutes Illustrating Barriers to Trade Between States*, prepared by members of the Marketing Laws Survey, Works Progress Administration, May 1939, pp. 63-71.

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and forced to declare his cargo of tobacco, beer and gasoline and to pay taxes on these commodities, and furthermore to provide for a second registration of the car by driving to the capital, he may wonder whether avoiding the inhospitable country would not have been a better choice. This is just the psychological effect aimed at by the new state policies. By discouraging "foreign" salesmen from crossing the state boundaries, undesired import is reduced.

Sometimes, however, official motivation points in another direction. Those who advocate these interstate tariffs emphasize the need to increase revenue and equalize the tax burden. Have these objectives been the genuine reasons for the erection of localized tariff walls or only a pretext? The so-called "use tax" offers the most interesting example of a multiplicity of political aims and of an ingenious legal construction. This curious contribution to interstate trade barriers should be considered a satellite of the retail sales tax (and, analogously, of receipts and gross income taxes, which, however, we may here neglect). Because of well-known legal complications it has seemed impossible to apply the state sales tax to interstate commerce. While levying a tax on every domestic sale, the state must refrain from taxing a car or any other commodity "imported" from across the border, even if the outside producer has not been subjected to a sales tax. Obviously the legislator could not but look upon such a situation as a leak in his dike.

The sales tax is principally a consumption tax—in the sense that it may be shifted to the consumer by raising the price of the commodity. The ability to shift it depends, however, on the elasticity of demand and supply. Shifting may be prevented if there are any sellers on the market who, in spite of the new sales tax, still offer the same commodity at the old price. Under such conditions the supply would be inelastic. And this underselling is easily realized if outside the state there are sellers exempt from any sales tax or paying a lower rate. The fundamental character of the imposition is therefore changed; for instead of being transferred to the consumer the sales tax hits

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the domestic producer because he has felt unable to raise the price. In other words the sales tax becomes a business tax.

To redress this grievance some shrewd attorneys invented an antidote: they separated the right to import from the right to use the commodity. Although the importing of the goods remained tax-exempt, the use of the goods—such as smoking the cigar or driving the car—became conditional upon a new imposition. Was it by chance that the rate of the "use tax" just equalled the rate of the sales tax? Seen from a practical point of view, the use tax is only a new label for the application of the retail sales tax to a "forbidden area." It compensates for the disadvantage suffered by those domestic producers and sellers who are subject to a sales tax in contrast to out-of-state producers and sellers who pay either a lower rate or no sales tax at all. Generally, underselling is prevented. The way is again paved for shifting the sales tax to the consumer.

Legal objections were silenced early in 1937 when the United States Supreme Court validated the principle of the use tax. Thereafter the new institution spread rapidly. Up to the early part of 1939 general use taxes had been adopted by 16 states, with rates ranging from one to three per cent (Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming). In contrast to its name the general use tax is far from being a universal levy. If equally imposed on all means of production, the prices of those commodities in which the taxing state wishes to compete successfully with its neighbors would also increase. But many exemptions have been granted: to commodities used in agricultural processing (Michigan); to fertilizers and containers sold to farmers (Louisiana); to cotton and cotton seed (Arkansas), to feeds and seeds (Ohio); to electricity, coal, coke, fuel oil or gas used industrially (Colorado); to gas, electricity, water (California, Ohio, Wyoming); to natural gas, steam, water, electric power (Louisiana); to property which becomes a component part of a new product (Colorado, Utah); to property not

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readily obtainable within the state and used in operating street railways (Iowa) etc. Moreover, because of these discriminatory devices, the general use tax takes on the character of a customs-tariff. Approximately only one half of these states stuck to the original purpose of equalizing the tax burden, and credited the tax-payer with the amount of the sales or use tax paid on the purchase transaction in any other state. From the point of view of interstate commerce, however, this compensatory device is negligible to the extent that exports are not subject to a state sales tax.

The domain of the new institution was gradually extended. Since we are here concerned with interstate commerce we may pass over the fact that in a few cases a use tax has been included in a municipal sales tax. But it is pertinent to mention that nearly all the above-mentioned states established special use taxes on gasoline or motor fuels—and these taxes perform an exclusively protectionist function. They are non-compensatory and are imposed at the same rate as the state gasoline taxes. It is interesting, moreover, to note that the fantasy of tax inventors did not fade before the same excise pattern had been applied to a tremendous variety of other commodities: tobacco, gum, petroleum, alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, sirup, oleomargarine, imitation butter and butter substitutes, ice cream, nuts, candy, cosmetics, building material, playing cards, cartridges etc. The area covered by special use taxes, furthermore, becomes constantly more and more indefinite (it now embraces Alabama, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming).[2]

Nevertheless we may raise the question whether the establishment of a new multiple trade barrier has been justified? Or, to confine the question to the main problem: Is the use tax our only recourse in meeting the objectionable features of the retail

[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 73-81.

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sales tax? If we consider the sales tax as a fiscal juggernaut which, as soon as possible, should be abolished a very simple solution could be offered. Since the use tax is only a supplement to the sales tax, both institutions could disappear at the same time.

It would lead us too far afield, however, to discuss here the merits and demerits of the sales tax. This issue is, of course, too complicated to be dealt with by referring to a couple of current arguments. To be convincing any discussion should be based on an appraisal of the whole American tax system. At any rate if we think that for a few states the only way out of a financial dilemma is the imposition of a heavy excise, like the sales tax, on everyday consumption it would be inconsistent to oppose shifting it to the consumer.

In addition to this main argument another reason for the use tax has been advanced—i.e. that it is unfair that a considerable portion of the total sales should go untaxed. It is the natural objective of fiscal policy to prevent tax avoidance. But this argument should not, I believe, be overstressed. Tax avoidance may be reduced in another way, viz., by making the sales tax general throughout the states and fixing it at a uniform rate. Occasionally, also, we meet with another type of fiscal reasoning: that the financial condition of many states is too critical to forego any available revenue. In a few cases this assertion may be correct. It cannot, however, justify the establishment of the use tax, for use-tax collections are relatively small. During the years 1936 and 1937 the yield from the use tax exceeded the sales tax collections by 3 per cent in a few states only. In other states the ratio dropped to one and one half and even to one half of one per cent.[3]

Incidentally, the insignificance of the return is quite comprehensible. It was discovered of old that the fiscal productivity of custom-duties is in inverse proportion to their protective effects. If the tariff is high enough to deter the import of any

[3] Jacoby, N. H., *Retail Sales Taxation*, p. 165, Chicago: 1938.

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foreign commodity its fiscal yield equals zero. Since the use tax functions like a custom-duty, the smallness of its yield is merely a sign of its effectiveness.

There are still a few other types of trade barriers which represent fiscal tools used frankly for the protection of the "domestic" market.

Taxes on chain stores can be constructed in a variety of ways. They may be graduated according to gross income, receipts, number of employees etc. However, if the rate schedule progresses in proportion to the number of retail stores in the chain, either within the state or within the whole country (Louisiana!), "foreign" chains are discriminated against for the benefit of "domestic" merchants.

On the other hand we sometimes meet with somewhat more concealed devices. By distinguishing between resident and non-resident individuals and corporations something akin to trade barriers may be set up. Of course it may be argued that from the outset there is a disparity between "domestic" and "foreign" corporations which should be wiped out, for only "domestic" companies pay a property tax on their assets. This reasoning, however, is superficial. Since "foreign corporations" are subjected to property taxes in their home states there is, in principle at least, no need for any tax equalization. A compensatory device results in a new disparity. For example, "foreign" corporations, eager to carry on domestic or local business, have been required to pay higher entry fees than domestic corporations. Even a flat rate of annual license fees or franchise taxes may become a means of discrimination if it is applied to "foreign" corporations doing little business within the state.[4]

Since the courts have ruled that insurance is not commerce, the "commerce clause" cannot be invoked to protect a "foreign" insurance firm from state levies. Therefore it is legitimate to

[4] See Melder, F. E., *State and Local Barriers to Interstate Commerce in the United States. A Study in Economic Sectionalism, The Maine Bulletin*, Vol. IX, No. 4, November 1937, p. 47. (*University of Maine Studies*, Second Series, No. 43.)

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grant "domestic" life insurance corporations either a lower premium tax than "foreign" life insurance companies are required to pay, or to exempt resident life insurance enterprises entirely from premium taxes. Only non-resident companies enjoy the additional burden. This is likewise true of fire insurance companies.

From the experience of the states in the application of taxes in the field surveyed in the course of this discussion several conclusions may be drawn:

1. Interstate tariffs demonstrate once more the misleading character of some labels and classifications. Only a formalist could contend that, because interstate tariffs are disguised as taxes, they principally belong to the field of tax and fiscal policy. In the majority of cases any raising of revenue is entirely incidental to the protective function of the device. Here, moreover, equalization of the tax burden, otherwise an impressive argument, is of minor importance and is sometimes only a pretext. Above all, these tariffs aim at changing the economic structure of the country by obstructing old channels of trade and creating more or less concealed privileges and monopolies.

2. Naturally, with many industries suffering under the scourge of depression and unemployment, there is a great temptation to resort to measures which will bring higher selling prices and greater security of outlets. Protective interstate tariffs are least harmful to those agricultural states the main products of which are exported to foreign countries at prices regulated by the world market, for they do not have to fear any retaliation from neighboring states. Retaliatory measures would affect only minor interests. Furthermore, interstate tariffs may help to compensate for a too strong industrial agglomeration in certain regions and to pave the way for migration and better localization of industries. Finally, and as a temporary measure, they may assist infant industries. (This argument, as I have already stressed, has often been abused, for getting rid of a temporary protection seems extremely difficult.)

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On the other hand, if there is no new development to offset them protective tariffs lower the standard of living, seriously diminish the volume of trade and reduce ability to compete on outside markets. By dividing up the national market into 48 sections the advantage of large-scale enterprises is gradually lost. The advance of the price level may therefore be intensified—in other words, the so-called real income reduced. Is it desirable to sacrifice the welfare of the whole community to the interest of some limited groups and mortgage the future for the sake of a temporary relief?

3. Obviously, the spread of interstate tariffs has been encouraged by the chaotic character of the American fiscal and tax systems. In order to remove at least some of the stimuli to the erection of new trade barriers more uniformity in state taxation is badly needed. So long as the rate of the sales tax is fixed at one, two, two and one half and three per cent, with half of the states abstaining from levying any sales tax or similar imposition; so long as the gasoline tax varies between two and seven cents a gallon; discrimination is so obvious that a further trend toward disguised custom walls may be expected.

Here we touch upon one of the paramount characteristics of isolationist policies—namely, that because pressure creates counter-pressure the creation of interstate tariffs becomes a cumulative process. Retaliation and border wars are natural consequences. Since the tendency was not nipped in the bud it becomes more and more difficult to arrest. Here again an inch tends to become an ell.

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Telescopes and Microscopes

W. V. HOUSTON

SOME three hundred years ago there was revived, among thoughtful people, the idea that man might be able to understand the material universe surrounding him if he would consent to look at it carefully. Once again he became interested in observing and describing things rather than merely pondering over them. It has often been said that the spread of this idea ended the reign of anthropomorphism in science. Yet the universe is still anthropocentric. Man is still its center, and the universe as he sees it is peculiarly a universe seen by man. From his vantage point on the earth he looks enormous distances, through telescopes, to see tremendous heavenly bodies. They are only tremendous compared with the man who sees them. From his laboratory stool he looks through microscopes at objects of incomprehensible minuteness. The minuteness is with respect to the man who looks at them and seeks to comprehend. Man is roughly in the middle of the scale between the very large and the very small, and perhaps it is the middle of the scale because man is there.

During the last three centuries a wide variety of instruments and methods has been devised for "looking" at the universe in various ways, and the telescopes and microscopes for looking at it in the ordinary sense have been developed almost to their limits. The new 200-inch reflecting telescope, about to be erected on Mt. Palomar, represents the limit thus far attained in the construction of telescopes. That limit is largely determined by the available financial resources, although the ever-present atmospheric unsteadiness is, and will continue to be, a serious obstacle. The limit of optical microscopes has been reached in the ultra-violet microscope, where the limit is set by the wave properties of the light itself. To go further we shall

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have to adopt quite different methods, and within the past few years a good start has been made on the design of electron microscopes to push, still further, the limit of smallness of those objects whose geometrical arrangement can be directly observed.

Any microscope or telescope is often popularly known as a magnifying glass and the magnification produced by it is regarded as the essential characteristic of the instrument. For a telescope whose principal function is the observation of near-by objects, including the sun, moon and the planets, this is correct. For the observation of distant stars, however, the magnification is of little importance. A star is effectively a luminous point, and remains a point no matter how much it is magnified. The purpose of building a large telescope is not to obtain high magnification, for a small telescope can magnify as much as a large one. The magnification depends on the curvature and the disposition of the lenses and mirrors and not on their diameters. A large telescope has two functions. The first is to provide as large a light-gathering power as possible and the second is to provide as large a resolving power—that is, as sharp an image, as possible.

In order to see a star at all a certain minimum amount of light from the star must reach the eye of the observer. The light emitted travels in all directions and only an infinitesimal fraction is intercepted by the whole earth. When observing with the unaided eye, only the very small part that passes through the pupil of the eye is effective. The pupil is a small hole about one-fifth of an inch in diameter, and the number of stars whose light is so intense that they can be seen through this hole is only about 5000. The vast majority of stars cannot be seen at all in this way. To see them it is necessary to collect more of the light that they emit. A telescope with an objective lens four inches in diameter intercepts 400 times as much light as the pupil of the eye. When this light is concentrated by the objective lens and the eyepiece so as to pass into the eye of the observer the star is made effectively 400 times as bright as when seen unaided.

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Since the 200-inch mirror will collect a million times as much light as the observer's unaided eye it will correspondingly increase the number of stars that can be seen.

The amount of light collected can be indefinitely increased by making larger lenses and mirrors but this is an expensive and difficult process. We can also "see" fainter stars by increasing the sensitivity of the detecting instrument. The human eye is a remarkably sensitive detector of light of the proper wavelength but a certain minimum amount of light-energy per second is required to make an impression. The development of sensitive photographic plates has done away with the old style of observing, in which the astronomer actually looked at the stars. Modern astronomical work is almost exclusively the photography of the heavens. With a photographic plate it is possible to make use of all of the energy received at one point throughout a long period of time. In this way the effectiveness of a telescope can be increased many times. Astronomers often make exposures covering several nights, and all of the energy received from a particular star during that time goes into the formation of a single small spot. By the use of these two means, large telescopes and photographic plates, the effective brightness of stars has been increased almost a billion times.

The other function of a large telescope is to produce smaller star images. When a telescope is regarded as a magnifying glass this seems paradoxical; but when it is realized that the light available is definitely limited, it is clearly desirable to concentrate it on as small as possible a spot on the photographic plate. If the image is large it is correspondingly less intense. The property of forming a small image of a very small source of light is also of great importance when observing the details of near-by objects. If the light from each point of a planet is spread out over a large region on the photographic plate the images of different points overlap and it is impossible to see the small details at all. This property (of permitting the separation of points close together on the object) is called the resolving power and is one of the most important characteristics of any

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optical system. High magnification without high resolving power is of practically no use, for the same reason that it is of little use to look at a newspaper half-tone with a microscope.

The simplest method of describing the passage of light through an optical instrument is to regard it as traveling along a system of rays. The rays are lines that represent the paths of the light and indicate the directions in which it is traveling. The rays extend in all directions from a luminous object. Those that meet a lens or a curved mirror are changed in direction by refraction or reflection. The ray that strikes the center of a lens passes through it with negligible deflection. Those that strike near the edge of a convex lens are bent toward those that pass through the center. Ideally all of these rays, no matter where they strike the lens, pass through a single point called the focus. All of the light, from a small or distant source, that strikes the lens or mirror passes through this one point. If there is a photographic plate at that point, all of the light contributes to blackening it. The rays from each point of an extended source come to a focus at a different point, but it is only if these points are sharp that a well-defined image will be obtained.

For various reasons the focus of an optical system is not a sharp point. There may be errors in the shape of the lens or mirror; or the design may be such as to give an approximate focus for light coming from widely different directions rather than an accurate focus for light from a single direction. These are instrumental aberrations and can be minimized by careful attention to design and construction. But there is another reason inherent in the nature of light itself. The description of the radiation of light in terms of rays is only approximately correct. For a precise prediction of its path it must be treated as a wave motion, with all the accompanying complications. This fact sets a limit to the precision with which light can be focussed at a point and constitutes a fundamental limit to the resolving power of an optical instrument.

The numerical resolving power of a single lens or mirror for distant points is roughly equal to its diameter divided by the

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wavelength of the light that is used. The average wavelength of visible light is about one fifty-thousandth of an inch, so that the maximum resolving power of a lens one inch in diameter is 50,000. This means that the diameter of the image spot formed by a distant star is at least one fifty-thousandth of the distance from the lens to the focus. If this distance is 12 inches, the spots will be twelve fifty-thousandths of an inch in diameter. This is the minimum size that could be attained with perfect optical work. If now one should attempt to increase the magnifying power of a telescope with this objective lens by looking at the image with a very high-power eyepiece the image could be made to appear as large as desired. However, if the image were magnified 500 times, each of these spots would be one-eighth of an inch in diameter. The resulting image would consist of a series of overlapping spots, one-eighth of an inch in diameter, and all smaller details of the picture would be completely obliterated. The magnification would be of no use unless accompanied by a resolving power that is sufficiently large. The resolving power of the 200-inch mirror will be theoretically 200 times as great as that of a one-inch mirror or lens, and the star images, under perfect conditions, will be correspondingly smaller and more distinct.

Just what will be revealed by the increased light-gathering power of the newest and largest telescope is of particular interest to those who try to contemplate the universe as a whole. Within relatively recent years it has been found that stars are not uniformly distributed through space but are grouped in clusters or galaxies. The galaxy of which our sun is a member includes the stars visible to the unaided eye, those comprising the Milky Way and many others. But far beyond the limits of this galaxy are other "island universes" similar to this one. Does this splatter of galaxies extend indefinitely or is there an end to it? No definite evidence of anything but a limitless extent has been obtained, but at least the new telescope will be able to reach much farther than ever before toward any limit there may be.

In the design of a microscope the resolving power is the

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paramount consideration. A microscope is distinguished from a telescope by the fact that it is intended for viewing objects that can be placed close to it. A telescope may produce an image that looks larger than the object because it is closer, but the image produced by a microscope really is larger than the object itself. Because the objective lens of a microscope can be placed close to the object the lens need not be made large in order to intercept a major fraction of the available light. A lens practically in contact with an object receives almost one-half of the light emitted by it. The only way to increase the amount received is to increase the amount emitted. Since most objects viewed with a microscope are not self-luminous they must be illuminated from an outside source of light. Consequently the light received in the microscope is merely that scattered by the object. A small object will scatter only a small amount of light, which must be spread over a very much enlarged image. Therefore the proper illumination of an object is a matter of much importance.

Magnification alone, in a microscope, is not difficult to obtain. The objective lens forms an enlarged image of the object in the microscope tube. This may be as much as a hundred times enlarged over the original object. If desired, another lens could be used in the same way as the first and the second image would have ten thousand times the linear dimensions of the object. Such a process could be kept up indefinitely, but the difficulty arises in obtaining sufficient resolving power.

There are numerous reasons why it is difficult to reach the ideally attainable resolving power in an optical instrument. One of these is the chromatic aberration of the lenses. Since the light of different colors is refracted differently by transparent materials a single lens has a different focus for each color of light. An image formed by such a lens will not be a single image but a series of images, one for each color. These will be at different places and of different sizes, and hence only approximately superposed. This can easily be observed by using a thick, convex spectacle lens, or a reading glass, to form an

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image of a distant white light on a piece of white paper. Such an image will have colored edges that are not too sharp. This defect can be minimized by the use of systems of lenses of different kinds of glass. Chromatic aberration is entirely absent from mirrors—an important advantage of reflecting telescopes over those using lenses. It has not yet been possible, however, to construct a reflection microscope.

Another source of aberration is to be found in the shapes of the lenses. It is very difficult to polish lenses with other than spherical surfaces, and these are not ideal. That such is the case can be observed by testing the action of a simple reading glass. When a word is viewed through the center of the lens it can be seen quite clearly; but if the glass is so held as to give high magnification, words seen through the edge of it are indistinct and much distorted. In fact it is very difficult to find theoretically a shape of surface that gives good definition over a large field of view. However, this again can be approximated by the use of combinations of lenses.

After the best has been done in eliminating chromatic and spherical aberration there still remains the limit set on the resolving power of lenses by the nature of the light itself. It is impossible to distinguish points on the object if they are closer together than about half the wavelength of the light used. With visible light this means about one-hundred-thousandth of an inch. If an object is viewed with a magnification of two thousand diameters, nothing smaller than one-fiftieth of an inch in the image will have any significance. Since all points and lines will be indefinite to this extent, higher magnification is useless. In the effort to overcome this difficulty, microscopes have been built to use ultra-violet light. With its shorter wavelength the resolving power is correspondingly increased. This is only a small advantage, however, since the shortest wavelength of light that is not absorbed by air is only a little less than half the wavelength of visible light. This merely doubles the resolving power or cuts in half the size of the smallest structures that can be distinguished.

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Although the wavelength of light determines the smallest sizes of particles whose structure can be recognized it does not limit the size of those whose presence can be detected by a microscope. A particle whose diameter is much less than the wavelength of light will scatter some light into a microscope. The image produced by this will be a very small disk whose size has nothing to do with the size of the object but will be determined solely by the resolving power of the microscope. A rough measure of the size is given by the brightness since a large particle will scatter more light than a small one. When a microscope is used merely to detect the presence of particles by the light they scatter it is known as an ultra-microscope. A very intense beam of light is directed on a suspension of small particles in such a way that none of the direct light enters the objective lens. By means of the light scattered into the instrument by the particles it is possible to count them and to make very crude estimates as to their sizes.

The ultra-microscope and the ultra-violet microscope represent the limits to which ordinary microscopy can be pushed. The limit is set not by the skill of the designer or operator but by the nature of light itself. To study the structure of still smaller objects it is necessary to make use of radically different methods. It would, of course, be desirable to use light of still shorter wavelengths, such as X-rays in a microscope. They can easily be obtained with wavelengths a thousand or ten thousand times smaller than those of visible light, but no very satisfactory means has yet been devised for focussing them. If such means can be found an X-ray microscope would permit the examination of structures of molecular dimensions.

Within the past ten years considerable progress has been made, particularly in Germany, in the development of electron microscopes. In a vacuum, electrons travel in straight lines except when influenced by electric or magnetic fields, and these fields can be arranged to act as lenses. In one type of instrument the electrons are emitted by a hot filament, as in a radio tube. They are then speeded up and focussed by a magnet on the

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object to be studied. This constitutes a system of *illumination with a beam of electrons* instead of a beam of light. The object to be studied is placed on a very thin film of collodion—in the vacuum, of course. When the film is thin enough most of the electrons go through it without appreciable scattering or slowing down, but an object on the film scatters, out of the beam, a certain part of the electrons. Since the number removed is proportional to the mass of the material along the electron path, a shadow of the object is impressed on the beam. Another magnet, corresponding to the objective lens of a microscope, focusses the electrons into an enlarged shadow-picture of the object. This picture is enlarged again and projected onto a photographic plate. The enlarging process could be repeated as often as desired but, as in optical instruments, the difficulty is not in the magnification but in the resolving power.

The instrumental limitations on the resolving power are called aberrations, in analogy with the spherical and chromatic aberrations of ordinary glass lenses. The electric and magnetic fields that speed up and focus the electrons must be so arranged that all of the electrons are brought to the proper focus. Present-day instruments can do this for only a very narrow beam of electrons, but it is to be expected that extensive improvements will be made in the near future.

The fundamental limitations on the resolving power of an electron microscope are at present entirely negligible. They will be of importance when distances to be considered are so small that the electrons can no longer be treated as charged particles of negligible dimensions, but must be treated, by means of quantum mechanics, as waves. Here again half of the wavelength can be regarded as the limit of the resolving power, but the wavelength of a fast electron is very small. The wavelength is inversely proportional to the velocity and can be reduced by increasing the electron speed. The wavelength of an electron whose velocity has been produced by forty thousand volts is about one four-billionth of an inch, a length much less than the diameter of an atom. Such a limit is clearly of no consequence

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at the present time. The limitations due to imperfections in the electric and magnetic lenses are those yet to be overcome; but they have already been reduced to such an extent that magnifications of fifty thousand diameters can be effectively used, and recently photographs that show the outlines of large protein molecules have been published.

One of the central problems in all microscopy is the interpretation of the image. One sees a certain distribution of light and shadow, or of different colors, and must try to infer from it the nature of the original object. With an optical microscope the differences in appearance are due to differences in the extent to which different materials scatter or reflect the light. In many biological objects these differences are very small and a whole cell may look like a drop of water. In some cases the structure can be brought out by staining with dyes of various kinds. The dyes are absorbed differently in different parts of the cell, and the structure that becomes visible is essentially the distribution of the property of absorbing the dye.

In the case of an electron miscroscope, as described above, the image is essentially a shadow picture. Electrons are scattered clear out of the beam by the object and the fraction of them removed is proportional to the amount of mass in the electron path. Hence it is only differences in density that can be observed. Differences in chemical composition, unless accompanied by differences in density, will not produce shadows. To make the structure of biological objects visible in an electron microscope it may be possible to use salts of heavy elements as stains. If salts of barium, for example, are differently absorbed by different parts of a cell, the electron microscope will show up the distribution of the barium because of its mass. Such things still remain to be investigated.

In addition to the examination of very thin objects transparent to electrons, other applications can be made of electron microscopes. They can be used for the examination of substances that emit electrons and that therefore correspond to optically luminous objects. Such an object is a very hot piece of metal.

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The electron microscope makes it possible to form an image of the electron emissivity of the metal and to see from just what points the electrons emerge. Some attempts have also been made to form images by means of electrons scattered or reflected from opaque objects, just as light is scattered from an ordinary object into a microscope. This, however, introduces difficulties into the focussing since the electrons tend to be scattered with changed velocities.

The electron microscope is still in its infancy and little can be said with certainty as to its future usefulness. Nevertheless it appears to be a means of overcoming the obstacle set by the wave nature of light, and as such it opens another unexplored region of the universe.

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Can There Be a Philosophy of History?

MAURICE MANDELBAUM

EVERY attempt to sum up past history, to grasp it as a whole and to decipher its ultimate meaning, represents a philosophy of history. The motive behind most such attempts has been a need to come to a reckoning with the philosopher-historian's own times, to justify or condemn contemporary social or political life by setting it off against the panoramic background of the recorded past. This quite understandable motive has led to the creation of a vast literature of considerable cultural significance. It would be surprising if a time of crisis such as the present failed to bring forth new attempts to construct a philosophy of history which would represent—if only on a minor scale—something of what Saint Augustine's *City of God* represented for the generations to which it belonged.

Yet today we find most empirical workers in the fields of the social sciences sceptical as to whether any philosophy of history can ever be adequate to the historical process itself. This scientific scepticism has not been confined to attacks upon the validity of particular attempts to interpret the meaning of history (although specific inadequacies in these systems have fostered it); rather, it has called into question the very idea that it is legitimate to seek a single meaning in history. In order to understand this scepticism let us indicate through a cursory examination of Hegel's philosophy of history the essential principles upon which such interpretations are based.

Hegel points out that philosophy (that is, *his* philosophy) brings to the domain of history a conviction "that Reason is the Sovereign of the World; that the history of the world, there-

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fore, presents us with a rational process." This conviction, which he believed to be firmly established in the realm of philosophy, was a hypothesis which he wished to verify empirically through an examination of the historical process itself. As he realized, there was a bare possibility that such a hypothesis, derived as it was from metaphysical speculation, might bear little resemblance to the facts uncovered by historical enquiries; but he sought to show through his actual summing up of past history that this possibility was not realized, that his metaphysical hypothesis conformed to the nature of the actual past of mankind.

Through further metaphysical considerations, supplemented by assumptions concerning the basic characteristics of man's social life, Hegel went on to make his original hypothesis more explicit. He held that the manner in which Reason evidenced itself in history was the progressive development of "the consciousness of Freedom." Therefore his survey of history was intended to show that such a development had taken place. In order to demonstrate this on an appropriate scale, embracing the whole of the historical process, Hegel turned his attention to the history of nations; as he says, "in the history of the World the Individuals we have to do with are Peoples." Thus, his empirical investigations of the historical process were not concerned with its details but with the great movement of civilization through one nation after another. In no other way would it have been possible, on the basis of his assumptions, to decipher the meaning of history as a whole.

Such an attempt to establish a sweeping hypothesis concerning the rationality of the historical process faces one logical difficulty: it could at best establish the rationality of the past, not of the future. The onward march of the consciousness of Freedom, as Hegel's critics have often pointed out, seemed to stop with the Prussian state of Hegel's own time. To project a continuation of any such past tendency into the future is possible, and may in many cases be justified; but it must be recognized (as Hegel himself did *not* recognize) that in so far as

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one does this it is impossible to treat one's hypothesis as completely verified. Consequently the attempt to decode the ultimate meaning of the historical process as a whole, and not merely the specific meaning of that portion which lies behind us, goes beyond any available evidence.

But it might be objected that in assuming past tendencies to be applicable to future events the philosophy of history is in no more precarious a position than are many other theoretical undertakings. No empirical verification of the future (in so far as it remains future) is possible in any realm—whether it be the realm of social or of physical events. So long as we treat the law with which we are dealing as a hypothesis, and not as a complete certainty, no harm can come from projecting the past into the future; whether our hypothesis will or will not be verified then remains to be seen.

Such a comparison between the philosophy of history and the sciences is not, however, defensible. Although the meaning of the term "law" may be the same in both cases, the function assigned to a law in the sciences is fundamentally different from that which it is believed to possess in the field of history. A scientific law does not fully describe what has happened nor does it prescribe what actually will happen. Such a law is obtained through abstraction from a total situation of a certain type, and it merely formulates how specified factors in such total situations may be expected to behave. Thus, the laws of falling bodies state certain constant relations between the factors involved, but these laws do not reveal the actual paths or velocities of specific falling bodies nor can they tell us which, if any, bodies will in the future fall to the earth. The philosopher of history, on the other hand, attempts to show that the actual concrete nature and the sequence of historical events (both past and future) follow directly from the law which he claims to have discovered. This is the major difference between the function of a law in science and in the philosophy of history, and from it many further differences follow. We may note, for example, that the scientist does not attempt to reveal the interrelations

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of all the given factors in a situation through any *one* law. The philosopher of history, on the other hand, is driven to postulate a single historical law by his search for a single ultimate meaning in history. This monistic postulate leaves all philosophies of history extremely vulnerable to attack. If it can be shown by a reexamination of the records, or by the discovery of new records, that the philosopher of history has misinterpreted some portion of the past the law which he claims to have discovered will not merely be weakened but will be overthrown. For it is impossible to support a law which is supposed to explain the concrete nature and sequence of events when it fails to conform to the actual nature or sequence of certain specific events in the past. And what is true of the past in this respect is no less true of the future: the philosopher of history stakes his whole system not only upon his reading of the past but upon his ability to predict the turn which actual events will take in the future. Such a difficulty does not trouble the scientist. Furthermore the very fact that his science consists not in discovering any single all-embracing law which will explain all aspects of actual, concrete events but in establishing partially independent, yet interconnecting, sets of constant relations makes it possible—and even likely—that when one hypothesis is overthrown the rest of his system will profit thereby. In the case of a philosophy of history the reverse is true: the overthrow of the one sweeping hypothesis means the overthrow of the whole conceptual framework of which it is the expression. Finally we may note that philosophies of history are extremely vulnerable to attack because they do not proceed step by step through limited to more and more general hypotheses concerning the facts. In their emphasis upon a single explanatory principle behind all historical changes they try to penetrate beyond the obvious and they almost inevitably set up their hypotheses with a single daring stroke. If science proceeded in the same manner we should be faced by a welter of mutually incompatible "ultimate explanations," each of which claimed to be self-sufficient, all-embracing and accurate. Under such conditions no organized

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and tested body of knowledge would emerge. And this is in fact the situation in which we at present find the philosophy of history. For example, in spite of many beliefs held in common, one cannot be both a Hegelian and a Marxian (interpreting Marx as having formulated a philosophy of history). To be either a Hegelian or a Marxian excludes the possibility of sharing the far-reaching Christian philosophy of history with its doctrine of the Creation, the Fall and the Redemption. All eclecticism is impossible in a field where each thinker has claimed to discover the one ultimate law of history. Only a deep scepticism can issue from such a situation. This scepticism does not betoken any excessive intellectual caution; it is a natural and thoroughly justified response to the multiplicity of claimants, no one of which has established its position by actually demonstrating that the alternative possibilities are in error.

In fact, thoroughgoing demonstrations of the errors of one's opponents are impossible in the field of the philosophy of history because of the scale on which such investigations are carried out. Like Hegel, all philosophers of history deal with events of far-reaching scope and significance, with the rise and fall of civilizations, with the course of history as a whole. In order to demonstrate the falsity of someone else's claim regarding such processes the philosopher of history would have to enquire critically into the operative factors in each of these epochs; but such a task far transcends the powers of any one man. Instead of such attempts at careful, point-by-point historical demonstrations we find the philosopher of history postulating the unity of the historical process and applying some concept derived from metaphysical or religious considerations (and, perhaps, from some widespread but by no means universal historical facts) to the whole of the historical process. Consequently instead of forming an organized body of knowledge, philosophies of history present us with what are at best disparate insights, no one of which can be accepted as fulfilling its pretensions to truth.

At the root of this situation is a difficulty which the philos-

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opher of history overlooks. He attempts to sum up past history, to grasp it as a whole, to decipher its one ultimate meaning, without first establishing the fact that it is legitimate to consider the past as a single, continuous and unified whole. Nor is it in the least self-evident that man's social past forms any such whole. In the light of present anthropological theory, for example, any such assumption of a continuous evolutionary process in history must be treated with extreme reserve; and we can say with considerable assurance that contemporary "primitive" cultures cannot be placed along a single linear path of historical development. Nor, in fact, is any such linear conception compatible with our ordinary notion of what the term history means, even as that term is applied to the past of the "civilized" peoples. An examination of the distortions which the conception of "history" undergoes when it is made subservient to the idea of a single, continuous historical process can be made clear through an examination of Hegel's work.

Hegel, when faced by the multiplicity of peoples, their simultaneous existence, but their divergent fates, sought to save the conception of the unity of history in the following manner. On the one hand he excluded all so-called "primitive" societies from any place in the historical process; for example, the whole continent of Africa is dismissed as not being a historical part of the world, as having "no movement or development to exhibit." In addition Hegel made the assumption that every people, for example the Greeks, contributes but once to history; only the ancient Greeks, and not his own Greek contemporaries, formed a part of history. Each of these assumptions shows that by "history" Hegel meant merely that series of events which presumably culminated in European culture. Yet even here the structure of history as he conceived of it broke down, for surely "the Germans" had as much influence in shaping the actual course of Western culture after the fall of Rome as had the Chinese, who occupy an early and none too flattering post at the very dawn of "history." But the role of the early Germans in history is simply ascribed by Hegel to their *Gemüth*, "an abstract

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principle innate in the German peoples." Yet, in the case of the Germans, as in the case of all other peoples, such "innate" principles must have developed their actual character partly, at least, through the historical antecedents of this people; but Hegel nowhere considers these interesting antecedents. Thus it seems hard to believe that "history," in Hegel's terminology, can mean even this. Instead of being the series of events which actually culminated in European culture, "history" is merely the series of civilizations which Hegel believed to be those most advanced at the time at which they flourished. But even this interpretation breaks down when confronted with the actual course of historical developments, since Hegel is cognizant of the abundant culture of Mohammedanism yet assigns it no real place in "history." In short, Hegel's "history" turns out to be nothing save those historical events in the past which afford him "materials for reflection."

The case of Hegel's work is enlightening since all philosophies of history proceed in an analogous manner. Assuming the unity of history they formulate a single hypothesis as an interpretation of all "significant" facts. What facts are significant becomes a question of which facts conform to the hypothesis. Each philosophy of history is "verified" on the basis of the facts that so conform. But true verification depends upon a verification through the interconnections of the facts themselves. And such verification, which is wholly empirical in character, has never been sought, and consequently has never been attained, by any philosophy of history. Thus, it is small wonder that empirical workers in the social disciplines have become sceptical of philosophies of history and have gone about their investigations of particular segments of the historical process without recourse to any comprehensive philosophy of history.

To reject all philosophies of history is not to commit oneself to a blind and unreasoning grubbing after more and more trivial facts. To deny that the historical past is a single, continuous

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process, and thus to deny that it can have a single and ultimate meaning, does not make the study of history meaningless for the social life of man. Furthermore, to deny that there is a single historical law is not to deny that there may be some historical laws.

The basic motive of most philosophies of history has been an attempt to formulate value-judgments concerning the fate of the historian's own culture. This motive is, in itself, praiseworthy. It is only the attempt to buttress such evaluations by a pseudo-empirical appeal to "the whole past of man" which is to be condemned. Such an appeal is futile for two reasons. In the first place, as I have already indicated, the assumption that there is a single law which determines the concrete nature of all historical events is a most untenable assumption. In the second place, and even more important, it is necessary to recognize that the ultimate validity of a moral judgment cannot be established through any appeal to the fact that the whole course of human history tends in any given direction. Even if we could trace a single continuous development throughout the past it would by no means follow that we should in the future attempt to carry on this line of development rather than oppose it. No value-judgments concerning the state of our own society and its possible future can be grounded upon an appeal to what has been the case in the past. Such value-judgments presuppose a knowledge of the forces at work within our own and other societies. They presuppose also an awareness of the full meaning of ethical judgments. Lacking either of these elements, any attempt to evaluate the course of history is—historically considered—almost certain to be no more than the expression of a personal or cultural idiosyncrasy. But with such knowledge we can praise or criticize the tendencies of our own times without vainly calling to the ghost of "the past as a whole" to witness what we say. Thus, the motive which lies at the root of most philosophies of history is capable of satisfaction without that mongrelization of historical enquiry and metaphysical speculation which is so apparent in traditional philosophies of history.

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And this is all the more important since ethical thought concerning social matters has been at least as much harmed by the introduction of irrelevant historical statements as historical understanding has been hampered by the too vague categories of explanation which have been employed in the philosophy of history.

We cannot here enter into a consideration of the problems of ethical judgments concerning historical events; it is sufficient to have suggested that such judgments are absolutely independent of any attempt to construct a philosophy of history in the sense in which we, following a widely-accepted usage, have defined that term. In what follows we shall merely seek to differentiate between a philosophy of history and certain wholly justifiable attempts to gain a theoretical understanding of history. This task is of some importance if misunderstandings are to be avoided, since Paul Barth, Bernheim and others have often spoken of these justifiable attempts as "philosophies of history."

In his famous manual of the historical disciplines Bernheim suggested that every historian must possess a philosophy of history. This contention, which we often find upheld in the literature of the subject, is usually based upon the fact that every historian must utilize certain principles of explanation in his descriptive analyses. No historian can, for example, escape the necessity of making some hypothesis concerning the role of individuals in social change. Every attempt to interpret what has actually transpired in human affairs demands that he either affirm or deny that the motives and character of certain individuals may, upon occasion, alter the course of history. Similarly in his attempts to unravel the skeins of political or cultural history the historian will be called upon to assume or deny that there are certain permanent, "innate" national or racial characteristics. Such basic explanatory principles are indeed implicit in every historian's work; they are also present in every philosophy of history. Nevertheless, these principles (which are hypotheses) are fundamentally different from the type of hypothesis which is the essence of a philosophy of history.

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Historical principles are genuinely empirical: they are hypotheses derived from an examination of specific aspects of actual, concrete instances, and are verified to the degree that they provide us with valuable clues as to the manner in which other actual occurrences are related one to the other. The basic hypothesis of a philosophy of history is not empirical in the same sense, for it does not aim to make clear the specific interconnections of past events; it seeks to interpret those events in the light of some underlying law which "regulates" them. But this attempt to find an ultimate law or rule in history is no substitute for the careful formulation of empirical historical principles. Even Hegel was forced to take a definite stand regarding the role of individuals in history, the influence of geography on culture, the innateness of national characteristics and other similar questions. But the belief in a single ultimate historical law conceals the hypothetical character of these specific principles and limits our investigations regarding them. For example, once one accepts the Hegelian dictum that history as a whole "shows the development of the consciousness of Freedom on the part of Spirit" certain hypotheses concerning the actual formative factors in historical change must be discarded. One cannot accept this dictum and still write the history of political change in terms of economic determinants. Far from being identical with each other, the empirical hypotheses of the historian and the ultimate laws of philosophers of history tend to work at cross-purposes.

This important difference between the use of empirical historical principles and the construction of a philosophy of history has often been overlooked because of the manner in which such empirical principles have been formulated. Having seen, for example, that climatic conditions may influence social life in various ways, some persons have put forward the hypothesis that all social differences are to be accounted for on this basis. This, like the postulates of the various philosophies of history, is simplistic in character but it does not therefore comprise a philosophy of history. Rather it is an early and crude attempt

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at empirical generalization in the realm of social phenomena. The principles which emerge from such attempts—no matter how crude they may have been at the outset—are of the greatest importance to the historian, for they serve as guiding threads for his further investigations. At the same time these principles constitute the body of the theoretical social sciences, for it is precisely such empirical generalizations concerning the interconnections and dependencies among social phenomena which the social scientist aims to achieve. Economic laws, for example, attempt to describe the relationships holding between various economic factors within a given society or societies. To gain materials for such generalizations the economist must look to history, whether it be contemporaneous or past. And the historian who wishes to understand the economic factors at work in the society with which he deals must have a knowledge of relevant economic principles. Through this constant interchange history and the theoretical social sciences fructify each other. Whatever may be our views of the present state of the historical and social sciences, it is not too sanguine to hope that in them we shall increasingly achieve genuine knowledge of the forces at work within our own and other societies.

It is out of such knowledge, and not out of attempts to "interpret the past as a whole," that we can gain the insight required to meet and solve the problems of our own time. Effective action depends upon accurate empirical knowledge. If that action is also to be moral in character we must be clear as to what morality means. But philosophies of history yield knowledge neither of fact nor of moral validity. It would be well if we could learn to face critical social situations with a firm resolve to find the facts and to do the right, rather than trust to vague appeals as to the course and meaning of history as a whole.

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The Use and Abuse of Books

Literary Scholarship During the Past Century

STITH THOMPSON

A LITTLE more than a century has elapsed since Emerson delivered before the Harvard chapter of Phi Beta Kappa his ever memorable address "The American Scholar." Emerson's clear distinction between the use of books and the abuse of them; his emphasis on the real observation of life and nature as the foundation of the scholar's thinking were needed in his own day as they are in ours.

Two points stand out in Emerson's treatment of the scholar —his warnings against the worship of the book and against dependence on European scholarship. Here he placed the same emphasis on self-reliance that was always to characterize him. Books are the inheritance of the thinking of the past and as such are invaluable but the true scholar will not find them a substitute for his own thinking. Everything must be continually revalued, even the authority of the great book—be it Plato or Shakespeare or the Bible itself. Nor must the American scholar be subservient to Europeans. He must realize that for a new and vigorous people he is the specialized thinker. Let him be bold and unafraid and ready to explore. This declaration of independence for the American scholar made no clear distinction between scholarship and creative writing. The thinking man might study people or objects or literature. The findings of one might appear in a novel or a poem; those of another in a treatise. Emerson insisted only that the thinking be clear and honest and not slavishly dependent.

I should like to look back over the three intervening generations of activity and observe the direction in which American

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scholarship has been moving, assess gains and losses and attempt some hazard as to the future. If the task were primarily concerned with creative writing—novels, stories, poems, essays and the like—we should find that the time when America should stand on her own feet was at hand even in 1837 and that after Whitman the declaration of independence was made more and more effective. Though Keats and the Victorians long had their imitators in America these gave way to a literature as distinctly American as Emerson could ever have wished.

Since I cannot undertake a comprehensive survey of all types of thinking in America I want to direct attention to a single field. What would Emerson say of the progress of literary scholarship in the past century?

Whenever we talk of literary scholarship we are sure to encounter certain confusions. The first is that between scholarship and teaching. The imparting of knowledge is the work of the teacher, who may or may not be a scholar. And even with the scholar a certain distinction must be drawn—that between learning and research. Many whom we call great scholars are merely learned. They know men and books both widely and deeply. They have taken possession of their heritage of culture. The research scholar must go further. He endeavors to expand the boundaries of his cultural inheritance. He is a restless soul and as such frequently lacks the repose of the man of learning. Only when we find a man who combines both research and learning do we have the truly great scholar.

With these distinctions in mind let us look at literary scholarship in 1836. With the exception of Noah Webster's Dictionary and Dunlap's *History of the Theatre* nothing of value by any standard had appeared. There were many men of learning who knew their ancient classics, their history, some French literature and the older English authors. A few were becoming aware of German. Emerson most deplored England and its undue influence in American thought; he had no need in his own day to fear the seductions of the Continent. If taken too

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seriously Emerson's address would have led to a regrettable provincialism. Such a development was in large measure prevented by Longfellow who at almost the same time, after his long sojourn abroad, began to introduce to his growing American public his enthusiasm for the best products of the culture of Scandinavia, Italy, Spain and Germany. Although he did not himself contribute to scholarship he did add enormously to the interest in comparative literature. No man ignorant of the best products of the writers of the Continent could any longer be counted learned.

When Francis James Child around 1850 began his active work as a student of English letters he became, out of mere necessity, a linguist, an editor of texts and a specialist in comparative literature. He found that but few of the monuments of English prose and poetry had been properly edited, that the history of the English language was very imperfectly known and that little work had been done on the literary relationships between England and the rest of the world. With unflagging energy he set out to remedy the worst of these deficiencies. His pioneer labors on the language of Chaucer and his editions of the English poets established him as a sound scholar; but it was his monumental work on the English and Scottish ballads that made him a peer of the best British or Continental authorities. He early learned that scholarship must be an international activity and began the long and fruitful association with foreign correspondents that was to enrich our humanistic researches—especially those in folklore—down to the present time. The best of the European methods which he learned and adapted to his own uses became a permanent influence on our literary studies.

Graduate instruction in literature was slow in coming to America. All of our earlier scholars studied in Europe—often at the expense of the universities where they were preparing to teach. Increasingly they went to Germany and became enthusiastic practitioners of the rigid research technique learned in German seminars. But it was only with the opening of the

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Johns Hopkins University in 1876 that this method began to assert itself in the literary departments of our graduate schools.

The last quarter of the 19th century saw the literary scholar joining himself with his fellows in societies and beginning to issue journals. In the 1860's when T. F. Crane began his long and valuable series of studies in medieval and Romance literature he had no suitable organ in America but was forced to publish in daily or weekly journals. With the founding of the Modern Language Association of America in 1883 and the institution of its quarterly publications the purely scholarly paper began to receive a recognition which has continued down to the present day.

The German method did not come in without protest from adherents of the older scholarship—a protest that has continued as a healthy curb on some of the more extreme manifestations of this method. Realizing that the language must be thoroughly known, texts properly edited and author's biographies accurately determined, the men in charge of the new seminars turned almost exclusively to such matters. But in their zeal for accuracy they seemed to be forgetting the literary appreciation and interpretation which was the ultimate goal of their endeavors. The result was a flood of monographs and editions. Particularly topheavy for some years was the output in linguistic or philological studies. And the man whose interest was in the great classics could not help being grieved. Here is what Henry Seidel Canby has to say, in his *Alma Mater*, of one of the best of the latter group, Henry A. Beers of Yale.

> He was a poet of sorts, a prose writer of excellent skill. He deserved the name of man of letters. It is not surprising, therefore, that the demand for science in the study of literature caught him unprepared. He was a reader of literature, not of facts about it, although in accurate information he had few rivals. Nevertheless, his methods were not the methods of natural science. It was conclusions, not data, that seemed to him important. He was, I believe, planning to write the literary history of America, which has not yet been properly written, when philology as the Germans understood it came into fashion. There was a sudden cry for medievalists, phoneticians, and practitioners of exact

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research, with no literary nonsense about them. Those areas of literary history which were difficult because of their remoteness and obscure because their poverty in artistic worth had repelled earlier readers, became the cynosures of scholarship. Anyone could write of Tennyson or Browning, but it took scholarship to discuss the "Andreas" or "Handlyng Synne."

The picture drawn is not unjust. Such narrow specialists could be found in all the great universities. And they are not extinct today. But the greatest scholars of that age were not extremists. They were men of learning as well as men of research. The exactness of their philology did not keep them from being great interpreters of Chaucer or Shakespeare. In their search for significant facts the best of these men brought new fields of learning within the scope of their scholarship. The whole world of Celtic literature and tradition, of Germanic and Romance philology, of Scandinavian myth and legend, of folk ballad and tale and play, of comparative literature in general—these all became the interest of the literary scholar. For most students who came under these new and manifold influences there was much more gain than loss.

From the 1880's to the present, in addition to certain large and comprehensive works of literary scholarship there has been a steady stream of small monographs—special studies of minute points of philology or literature. Many of them are worthless—mere task-work written to secure a degree or to attract the attention of prospective employers. But those that show solid achievement have been valuable not only as they have actually added to the store of knowledge but also as a training ground for young scholars working under great masters. It is to be regretted that many of these promising men have ceased effort with the one good monograph, but that is hardly the fault of the system of training.

There is, of course, a point at which unguided monographic scholarship ceases to be very valuable. A good deal of duplication of effort is inevitable. And individuality of method often makes impossible the fitting together of two studies, however

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good in themselves. At such a point the need for cooperation and standardization is felt. The makers of dictionaries have for a long time pooled their efforts, but it is only within recent years that cooperative research in other fields of philology and literature has been common. The large philanthropic foundations have encouraged the undertaking of major projects, and these efforts have sometimes been seconded by research groups in the Modern Language Association and similar societies. Though the publication of special monographs, many of them pieces of immature research, continues unchecked there is undoubtedly more effort now to appraise and correlate them in the light of the real needs of scholarship.

The most solid accomplishments of the past century in American literary study have been works of large scope. No country need feel apologetic when it has produced Child's *English and Scottish Ballads* or Furness' *Variorum Shakespeare*. Our work on Chaucer is unusually distinguished—as witness Child's treatise on the language; Manly's large cooperative collation of the texts; Tatlock's, Kittredge's and Root's studies; and finally Robinson's great edition. Spenser and Karl Young's researches in medieval drama are other notable achievements conceived and executed on a heroic scale.

The student of English literature today approaches his task with much that is already accomplished. Most of the important authors are well edited and their biographies and literary relationships have been worked out. Most of the facts of the language seem to have been investigated. The scholar interested in any aspect of the literature is discouraged by the vast bibliography of monographs he soon collects. And if this is true of the mature investigator how much more disheartening must the situation seem to the young graduate student seeking something valuable to which he may turn his newly acquired technique. Will there not soon come a time when all the texts will be edited, all the lives written, all the moot points settled? What then can the scholar do?

This question was answered very positively in 1929 by Nor-

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man Foerster in his provocative book, *The American Scholar*. Here he declares the bankruptcy of literary history and especially of all types of literary scholarship that use the methods of science. Although he pays his respects to the scientific method in its own sphere he refuses it a place in the study of literature. He feels that the men who collect facts about the language or the lives of authors are concerned with the impermanent, often accidental, features of the classics and that these men have no proper insight into the qualities that give abiding esthetic value. He deplores their excursions into history and psychology, though he approves of philosophy as a basis for criticism. He thinks the literary historian does everything about literature except enjoy it and evaluate it properly. He thus praises the power of criticism:

> This natural sense, this aptitude for entering intuitively into the inwardness of art, is after all the fundamental virtue in scholarship. Although it is a special gift, it can unquestionably be developed and perfected. Through constant exercise, through familiarity with at least one fine art other than literature (preferably, I should say, painting or sculpture), and through increasing knowledge of life and wisdom in the art of life (life being the subject of literature), it passes into good taste and critical insight, which are the ultimate powers of comprehension.

Although his position was approved by a number of important scholars, those now known as the humanists, it was not to go unchallenged. In his *The Province of Literary History* Edwin Greenlaw presents the case for the type of scholarship which Foerster regrets. He brings out clearly the inaccuracy of the unhistorical criticism prevalent during the Renaissance and even the 17th century, the false valuations arrived at because the critics knew too little about the authors they were criticizing and the conditions of their environment. He defends "learning" as an interesting activity in itself and he shows that, just as is true in pure science, it is often the seemingly irrelevant fact that offers the key to the correct interpretation of a piece of literature. He demands freedom of range for the literary

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scholar, for his quest may well lead him into history or popular tradition or even science. He disagrees with Foerster who, he feels,

> would substitute the timeless laws of literature, whatever that term may mean, for the study of the masterpiece as an expression of the human spirit, springing from the subtle relations between genius and experience, not to be understood through intuition alone.

He contrasts the two methods thus:

> There are two avenues of approach to major poetry. One is to see in the masterpieces of the past, especially in the classics, evidence of what are called the immutable laws of literature and of the timeless and changeless character of the human spirit. So regarded, literature is the transcript of the life of the human spirit, independent of place or time, eternal, the quest of the soul for reality amid the flux of circumstance. The second method of approach is through regarding this literature as also the reflection of a certain period in human history; the transcript of life being . . . not necessarily realistic or even the result of conscious thought on the part of the author. By the first method of approach, the *Divine Comedy* is a great work of art to be studied without regard to the time in which it was produced; by the second, it represents a definite stage in intellectual history, and its roots grow deeply in the soil of the time. The first method is the method of literary criticism; the second is the peculiar province of literary history.

Though Max Eastman (see especially his book *The Literary Mind*) approves Greenlaw's rejection of the humanist's position he finds that rejection entirely too mild. Indeed he feels that Greenlaw's attachment to learning is almost as mystical as Foerster's allegiance to pure criticism. Greenlaw does not go far enough. Eastman would subject the whole of literary history and criticism to a keen scientific scrutiny. He insists that what we need is more science and consequently more intelligence. The humanistic critic uses words without real understanding of their meaning. He talks about the psychology of creation and appreciation and refuses to learn even the rudiments of psychology. He talks learnedly and authoritatively but he does not know. Criticism must be based on accurate philological, historical, psychological and sociological knowl-

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edge. Especially by way of psychology may we hope for real advance in literary criticism in the future.

Surrounded by so many contradictory voices what shall our literary scholars do? Wherever they go they seem headed for perdition. Yet a reading of the three books just mentioned does not really paralyze effort. Carefully considered they reveal the study of letters, in spite of its searchings of heart, as in a healthy state. The controversy is largely concerned with warnings against excesses. Even the humanists do not really despise accurate linguistic and historical knowledge: they merely prize pure criticism. And most practitioners of literary history would doubtless follow Mr. Eastman further than he imagines.

Must we choose among these methods? I cannot think so. The real scholar will listen carefully to all that these men have to say and will be influenced by each of them in some degree, but he is likely to go his own path—a path determined largely by his temperament and his interests. For our students of literature have formed themselves into a larger number of classes than my discussion would suggest. Since many of our best men take several types of study for their province it will be profitable to look at their present activities a little more analytically.

1. The solver of problems in literary history has been the principal object of attack by the humanist. This man is, indeed, something of a detective. He becomes interested in clearing up some difficult point of chronology or biography or influence and subordinates all else to his quest. He searches records and overcomes the handicaps of language or the decipherment of manuscripts. If he is successful he may illuminate a whole period of literary history so that we can see an author as he was in his own time. This has been, for example, the result of the careful researches of Wallace for Shakespeare or Manly for *Piers Plowman*. This type of investigator is likely to be controversial. He loves a scholarly combat. And he is always on the track of new problems. His is single-case work. Having cleared up one crucial point he moves to another. At his best he is an invaluable aid to literary criticism; at his worst a

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pedant whose activity is no more valuable than that of the man who solves jig-saw puzzles.

2. The man who starts out as the literary detective may well become a student of a man or a period. He often begins with a monograph and from that proceeds to a large consideration of all the circumstances suggested by his single problem. Thus Harold Thompson years ago began work on Henry MacKenzie, a Scottish author of the 18th century. His investigations into MacKenzie of necessity led him into a study of all the writers of the period, so that eventually his researches made him an authority on the whole body of 18th-century Scottish literature. This is the most fruitful outcome of the monograph method.

3. A third type of literary scholar concerns himself primarily with ideas. Temperamentally a philosopher, he takes a broad view of men and movements. He is necessarily international in his scope. He is acutely conscious of the fact that certain patterns of thought are contagious, that one period differs from another in ideals and intellectual interests. The attempt to learn how these intellectual patterns behave and affect literature takes him on many a weary but rewarding expedition into remote places. He may, like Leo Wiener, follow an Arabic will-o'-the-wisp or, like George Woodberry, he may produce invaluable studies of the human spirit as it reveals itself in literature. Much of this type of scholarship has been too superficial. Much remains here for the man who is willing to undergo the rigors of a thorough preparation in languages, philosophy and scientific method, for nowhere else does humanism need more of the leaven of accurate and unbiased study.

4. In spite of the strictures of the humanist the scientific method is a valuable tool in modern literary scholarship. A whole group of scholars are exploring the sciences, especially anthropology, sociology and psychology, to see what light they may throw on literature. Investigations in folklore may lead us to rewrite the whole of mythological theory. Metrical and phonological experiments may make much of our old termi-

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nology obsolete. And even esthetics, that special domain of the humanist, may be invaded by the psychologist who may not much mind having the humanist dub him pseudo-scientist.

5. All types of students thus far mentioned, except perhaps the first, may become synoptic scholars. There comes a time in the scholarship of any field when the results must be brought together in order to afford a comprehensive view. More than mere bibliography is involved, for the best men of this type assimilate the whole of the writings on a subject and arrange them so that we can see it both in the large and in detail as we wish. Here we must have maturity of judgment, a comprehensive linguistic equipment and a facility in mastering and ordering a great range of material. Wells' *Manual of Writings in Middle English* is one of the most notable examples of such work. The best synoptic scholars are able not only to bring together the competent work in a field of knowledge but to suggest profitable subjects for investigation. Archer Taylor of Chicago, for instance, is extraordinarily skilful in pointing out exactly what still needs to be studied, what areas have been adequately treated and which would seem to be unfruitful. We need just such guidance if we are to avoid the worst results of undirected monographic activity.

6. At the end of our list there remains the cooperative scholar. He sees unattempted tasks of large scope. He grasps the problem as a whole, plans out the logical order of completion and enlists his co-workers. He must be a man of both first-class attainments and executive ability. Some of the most successful of the cooperative plans have been in the realms of folklore and primitive literature. The association of Krohn with Finnish folklore and of Boas with American anthropology is everywhere honored. The research groups of the Modern Language Association are now undertaking some large projects that may show how fruitful such research is in more purely literary studies.

Only seldom does a great scholar belong exclusively to one of these groups but temperamentally he usually favors one type

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of activity more than another. Though the best specialist retains his ability to be the general practitioner the narrower man may find that although his work adds little to the sum of human knowledge and understanding it may absorb him utterly. He must then remember Emerson's warning: to be not the mere thinker but *man thinking*. With this injunction kept in mind each man may safely be a scholar in accordance with his own temperament.

As we look about now at the end of a century, though we find much to approve there is much to criticize. Our younger men and women lack the classical culture of the older generation and it may be some time before they realize their need. From too early specialization in literature the new generation is without proper historical and philosophical grounding. It must be the business of the graduate schools to make this condition as temporary as possible.

Yet despite discouraging signs there is much in the work of the American scholar of today to hearten us. Nothing but good can come of the debates of the various schools, for they are all striving to the utmost to promote what they think is the best interest of the common cause. Such a contest can only produce better critics and better scholars.

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Freedom of Speech

MAX ASCOLI

WE CANNOT start curtailing others' freedom of speech without running the danger of having our own freedom of speech curtailed some day." The champions of civil liberties are never tired of using this stock argument. They are proud of attaining absolute consistency by defending men or groups from whom in return they can expect only scorn and persecution. They argue that what we do not allow to come out freely will make its way underground. Tolerance it is assumed, besides being a high ideal, is also a particularly good technique for disposing of nuisances.

When common sense controls these ideas it gives them some meaning—under ordinary circumstances. Ordinary circumstances are those that the normal instruments of law enforcement can cope with. The cops know how to watch a meeting, how to keep the people milling around a soap-box speaker so that the curious onlookers may not be drawn into the enthusiasm of the few militant listeners. It is a routine job: today there is a meeting of the left, tomorrow one of the right. A first of May parade or a Bund meeting can be the object of serious worries and of elaborate police precautions. But in the end the thick line of massed bluecoats puts the fear of God into the hearts of agitators. The excitement passes away, the traffic circulation becomes normal again and the lone patrolman is back on his beat. Possibly he is already thinking of the next political meeting he is going to police. Today the Bund, tomorrow the communists. It is always the same story: one after the other and each because of the other. Freedom means that everybody in his own turn gets the chance to yell and parade. That's all right.

This sound, square-footed cop's philosophy presupposes a moderate degree of political excitement, a rather neat separa-

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tion between militant groups, and mildly interested public opinion. It presupposes a public opinion humorously disposed toward the endless succession of political shows but not too much taken with any one of them.

And this works all right—in normal, prosperous times. There are, however, situations in which the political performance tends to become something like a revivalistic meeting, with always the same actors and the same style, and an audience that remains the same in character while it constantly thickens. When the spirit of revivalistic militancy gets hold of the public the cop starts working with a heavy heart. He has to deal with a compact mob that protects and hides the men by whom it is ruled. It is not the sight of the bluecoats that matters then but their number. The man with a night stick is as helpless as an archer facing a crowd of gunmen.

Together with the cop, his philosophy, too, is placed under fire. The fascists say that his is a philosophy of men who do not believe in anything and who have no principles, to whom one idea is as good as another. Those who believe in freedom of speech, argue the fascists, are skeptical to a point which is only equalled by their cynical hypocrisy. When everybody has talked himself hoarse, and all issues are befogged by the endless fuming of words, then the devotees of free speech take care of their own affairs. This is Hitler's criticism and summary of liberalism, and he has adopted arguments that for decades had been the regular stock of socialist agitators. Karl Marx, in the middle of the 19th century, denounced civil liberties with a bitterness that has been equalled only by Hitler in our times.

Civil freedom, the anti-democrats say, is a mere instrument by which the people are permitted to deceive themselves for the benefit of some clever manipulators of public affairs. Lullabyed in the rhythmical swing between opposite political extremes they believe they are governing themselves while their houses are being robbed. The robbers, those who keep the show going, are the capitalists, say the Marxists; the Jews, say the

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nazis. In both cases the group of robbers is comparatively small and can easily be wiped out once the people awake and arise. Liberty, the enemies of democracy say, is the opiate of the people. The Marxists and the fascists think alike about liberty, for both conceive of only one integrated community.

The Marxists think this real community is shaped by the class interest of the proletariat. The fascists think it a family of race and blood. Freedom of expression, both say, means freedom to keep the people amused and dozing. Freedom of assembly means freedom to separate the unity of the people into two sections: The public of the doped and the oligarchy of the dopers.

Those who assume the defense of civil liberties at any price, no matter whether the potential victim is the communist party, the Klan or the Bund, are the most unfortunate targets of the anti-democratic attack. To the extremists of right and left they are foolish hypocrites who, nevertheless, can be used. So the various groups of extremists adopt the language of civil liberties. The resulting confusion makes the position of the advocates of civil liberties even more distressing. On the one side they are under fire as stealthy advocates of conservatism; on the other as subversives who want to paralyze the existing order in the interest of the coming revolution. Their allies of both camps chuckle and anticipate the moment when the silly show will be over. But the advocates of civil liberties cannot afford to listen to their enemies or to discriminate among their friends. The harder the pressure, the busier they become, buttressing the platform where those speakers stand who call them liars. They adjust the microphone in front of the mouth of their sneering allies whom they know to be their real enemies. They keep watch over their spiritual brothers, the cops. The guardians of order must not blunder and the night sticks must dangle idly from their wrists while, massed in solid lines, they guarantee to the preaching of hatred and of malice a most deferential laissez-passer.

Now, it seems to me that there is something wrong in the

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attitude of the liberals. The wrong is not in passivity as such. Gandhi's passivity shook the British Empire. But Gandhi's inaction was a revolutionary resistance to the English rule, inspired by an all-pervasive faith. What is the faith of the liberals? Does their passivity come from a wary, skeptical lack of any belief? Is there not some truth in what their enemies say? Is the vigorous defense of both sides of every argument not the absence of a point of view, rather than a point of view?

The men who wrote the Bill of Rights certainly were not skeptics. They had a definite goal. They believed that God or nature had guaranteed to men certain rights that they assumed to be inalienable and that must be won and maintained for them. They thought that between man and the attainment of happiness there was the structure of an evil political order which had to be demolished. They were harsh and even intolerant toward individuals and institutions that stood in the way of human happiness attained through liberty.

They did not envisage freedom as a method of solving political difficulties by a lottery of contradictory opinions, each as valuable as the other, and only the head-counting determinate. They did not expect social harmony to evolve from the scramble of interests. Freedom to them was made self-evident by their knowledge and hatred of tyranny. They conceived freedom as a weapon to harass and damage institutions and men that, if left unchecked, made for tyranny.

The liberals of today have very little doubt that unchecked economic freedom in the production and exchange of goods has to be brought under some form of social control. They want legal restrictions to prevent the tyranny of monopoly and accumulated wealth from driving men to servitude and despair. They consider a laissez faire, resulting in submarginal living for millions, to be not freedom but anarchy. They tell us that in the economic world, freedom can be saved only through responsible organization and intelligent control.

But in the production and the distribution of words the liberals are still uncompromising defenders of laissez faire.

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Over everything else—the employer, the worker, the school, the family—they accept and advocate some controls. But the soapbox and its more refined equivalents must be left absolutely unhampered, so that everybody may have his chance to propose a pension scheme, a bonus payment, a social upheaval or the extermination of those he does not like.

One might conclude from this either that words have a wondrous self-healing quality or that they are just noisy air, but the attitude of our liberals does not come from any such mystic belief or crude cynicism. Rather, I think, it comes from the fact that they have been so taken into the fight against the economic tyranny of monopoly, the political tyranny of the machine politicians, the social tyranny of the Babbitts, as to forget that such a thing as the complete all-around tyranny, embodied in the complete all-around tyrant, could exist, and that among all the instruments of tyranny there is none so powerful as the skilful use of words.

We have found a name for it: propaganda. We are told that there are no limits to the power of propaganda, to the possibility of so twisting the nerves of men that they themselves cease to know what they think or feel or wish. But propaganda on the present-day scale and with the present-day efficiency is a new phenomenon, complete all-around tyranny was, until a few years ago, an entirely forgotten one, and propaganda as an instrument of tyranny is a fact that we know about but that our minds are not yet ready to cope with.

Freedom of speech is enshrined as the absolute touchstone of all freedoms. It appears as the paragon of all rights and as the simplest of all. The articulation of the right to make a living or to receive an education—the articulation of practically every other right—requires an enormous amount of organizing, of upkeeping and of planning. Countless concrete cases arise all the time that are hard to fit into the generic provisions of a right. The niggard worker or the negligent schoolboy deserve little protection, yet they cannot be left rotting in idleness or in utter ignorance. The right to make a living is hedged about by

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innumerable restrictions inherent in the fact that men live in a certain form of society—trade union restrictions, for instance, which prevent one man from depressing another's wages, or tests of competency applied by employers, private and public. In the exercise of every other right we are restricted by limitations and rules. One cannot even exercise the right to play in a tennis match without some proof of ability. The right of free speech is apparently the only one that can be subjected to the test of universal enjoyment. Everybody has a pair of lungs and some command of words.

Therefore the situation is of an ideal simplicity: let anybody who wants to talk. From the enshrined principle irradiates an eternal grant of immunity and indulgence to every uttered or utterable word. Everything which is expressed is good: there is no problem of harmonizing or coordinating the expressions. The greater the bedlam the more perfect the harmony. If you start curtailing freedom of speech, even of would-be tyrants, you bring about tyranny. This is the one perfect and absolute in the whole gamut of human rights. Such is the liberal philosophy.

All this would be perfect if real all-around tyrants had not made their come-back into our world—eloquent, inspired tyrants, who have talked themselves into power because liberalism has debased free speech from a weapon against tyranny into a magical fetish symbolizing all freedom.

Free speech was instituted as a weapon against oppression, as a tool for finding out the truth in any given situation and the facts influencing our lives as citizens. The founders of this democracy granted universal freedom of speech and immediately set about using it to gain popular support for their own ideas. They wanted to spread the belief that the thirteen colonies could not be ruled by an ignorant government sitting three thousand miles away, that the Union had to be extended to the people and that the Bill of Rights had to be incorporated in the Constitution. Men like Jefferson, Hamilton and John

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Adams did not conceive freedom of speech as free-for-all gabbling. Rather, in the examples they set, they used it as a method for questioning the people, for stating issues and for suggesting solutions in line with their own ideas and interests.

This is, unless I am mistaken, the basic meaning of freedom of speech. It is a weapon against tyranny, a method of inquiry into the moods and feelings of the people and an instrument for raising reasonable questions and proposals to which the people can answer and react. But there must always be somebody doing the questioning, formulating the proposals, gathering and coordinating the answers. There must always be somebody setting the goals and the rules of the discussion. There is no discussion if nobody is in the chair; and there must always be an appeal to reason, for the whole assumption in free speech is that men can be governed by reason.

Freedom of speech, to have social meaning as opposed to magic meaning, demands leadership and sufficient personal examples of what it should be used for. If these two conditions are met, the education of the public widens and deepens, more and more men can qualify for positions of leadership and more of the popular wisdom can be pumped up and utilized for the conduct of public affairs. It is the upward spiral of civilization. When on the contrary freedom of speech is used for confusing issues and stirring up passions, as an instrument of hatred and not of communication among men, it becomes the most effective of leeways to chaos. In both instances indiscriminately to defend freedom of speech is the equivalent of being unable to discriminate between a legal business or trade union and a criminal racket.

There is no speech unless there is a speaker and an audience and communication between the two. And of speech there are only two types: either dialogue or monologue. If freedom of speech is to mean more than simply the universal right to sermonize it must be validated by a certain amount of skill in the organization of the dialogue. Socrates, who died for freedom of speech, was sometimes ruthless in conducting his dia-

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logues. How biting would have been his reply had someone told him that freedom of speech could be construed as a wholesale, inalienable right; as a universal grant of immunity to all articulate sounds that the mouth of man may utter.

The writers of the Declaration of Independence and of the first Amendments to the Constitution thought the political freedoms and the rights they had listed were inalienable. By this they meant that every effort to nullify these rights and freedoms must be counteracted by revolution. Their actions had already proved them true to their belief. The Declaration of Independence owes its birth to the eloquence of Jefferson and its life to the energy of Washington.

Rights have meaning only in so far as they are implemented by action and serve a social purpose. When rights are acted upon and made effective they give returns in relation to the amount of skill and energy displayed in using them. Electoral rights are of no great help to the citizens who do not care about politics. The right to a free education brings poor learning to slack students.

Free speech, like every other social instrument, demands the energetic application of standards if it is to fulfill a human need. It requires men willing to take responsibility for a ruthless defense of standards of truth and a ruthless opposition to what is faked. The outflow of gossipy or malicious expressions is harmless if there are enough men willing to call things by their right name. An honest idea, an outspoken speech are like measuring rods according to which all other ideas and speeches on the same subject will be graded. When Abraham Lincoln said that a nation half slave and half free could not endure he set the issue of the Civil War; when he pronounced the Gettysburg address he practically concluded it, and forever established his standard among the politicians of all times.

Something analogous happens in economics. The circulation and distribution of wealth is definitely proportioned to the amount of work socially produced; or, in economies with a gold

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standard, the volume of paper money is in definite proportion to the gold reserve. The gold reserve that makes freedom of speech workable is the courageous words that make sense. Political freedom is saved by those who act courageously and responsibly—not by the professional attorneys of every trouble-maker who outrages the decent sense of mankind. The woman who laughed aloud at a preposterous statement in a Bund meeting was registering a demand for decent standards of free speech and was thus defending it far more logically than the liberals who defend the right to be preposterous.

In our times, because of our rediscovery of unmitigated tyranny, the adequate and relevant use of speech and of action cannot help being aggressive and, occasionally, intolerant.

But here the eternal argument pops up again. How far can the liberal go on the road to intolerance? If he makes life hard for the friends of tyranny, who will guarantee that the same precedents will not be applied against the friends of freedom? But this is the square-footed philosophy of the patrolman. It is the same as saying that we are not entitled to gain wealth or reputation in competition and therefore at the expense of somebody else, because somebody else may one day gain at our expense.

This apparently lofty reasoning is a compound of skepticism and of do-nothingness. It is true that if we judge we expose ourselves to being denounced. As men, we build our character only in so far as we are willing to act, knowing that what we do to others will be done to us. Therefore we judge, although we know that we shall be judged. In being hard to other people we authorize other people to be hard to us. But I do not see why the fact that our persons are called into cause should reduce us to inaction. Rather, I think the test of the character of men comes when they act, knowing that they are going to pay for what they do; and when this knowledge does not deter them, but prompts them to act. This is called responsibility. The opposite is a queer evangelism: an attitude of men who like better to bless their enemies and let them take the respon-

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sibility for evil than, with the utmost of their strength, to prove their enemies wrong and resist their evil.

Fortunately we need not invent much to make life uncomfortable for the friends of tyranny. We have only to use, without self-consciousness or sense of guilt, certain conditions and instruments which are at our disposal. The cop and his big brother, the G-man, naturally keep an eye on political agitators and may discover in a vicious rabble-rouser an ordinary crook. The community is entitled to know, through the investigations of policemen, income-tax agents, journalists and muckrakers, what kind of men they are who want to upset its life, where they get their incomes and who their friends are. They may be the saints of tomorrow; but let their sainthood be tested by ordeals.

When a rabble-rouser from the right is cut off the air the left-wingers chuckle. When a provincial boss denies free speech to left-wingers those on the right beam. In each case the rejoicing is not dampened by the fear of one day falling into the same difficulties as the enemy. This fear is the particular domain of the most orthodox liberals—those virtuous friars whose social function is to monopolize sorrow for other people's sins and who, though themselves anti-revolutionary, frown at all the devious anti-revolutionary devices of prosecuting attorneys, G-men, income-tax collectors, muckrakers, radio directors and newspaper editors, sniffing a danger to freedom on every side.

They are right that the danger exists. But it makes it even more imperious that we acknowledge the need for tools of investigation and even of repression, learn how and when to handle them and to what extent we can trust ourselves in using them. Their danger is considerably reduced if all this is known at the moments when they are needed. Sometimes moralism or puritanism prevents the candid recognition of what is plainly needed (as, for example, when prohibition branded alcohol as sinful and for the sake of salvation from a vice lent its aid to

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crime and racketeering). When too many efforts which aim at using the instruments of freedom to subvert society are going on, the demand for investigation and defense is proof of health in the social order.

If there are subversive agencies in a society a healthy society investigates them. One of the functions of free speech is to make them known. The need for investigation creates organisms and organisms create jobs. Politicians are like hounds, always ready to pounce on a job. Those run fastest usually who are least burdened by scruples—young aggressive headline hunters, looking for personal publicity and quite likely to botch their jobs. But the fact that the job of investigating subversive activities is frequently manhandled does not mean that it should not be done. It simply indicates that the better equipped people have kept aloof, some out of evangelical scruples, some out of the feeling that doubtful functions had better be dealt with by doubtful men.

What is there in the neo-liberal philosophy that shies away from calling a spade a spade? Is it not true that the public is abundantly tired of certain forms of labor warfare, and rather well informed about the strict secret that everyone has just whispered to the ear of the man sitting next to him in the subway: that if you want to swing the country to the right or to the left you have to bore from within, talk civil liberties and wave the flag. Why should not the liberal speak out for the tired public and warn the disguised conspirers that they are recognizable to the naked eye? But no. The liberals have given themselves to another function—to lie in wait for the first authoritarian demagogue who, having scented the discontents in the air, sets out to exploit them and wreck liberal institutions while he puts on the best possible show. To this show the liberals volunteer with unfailing enthusiasm. By shouting aloud their righteous indignation and by offering themselves as expiatory lambs they give the authoritarian demagogue the benefit of every shred of publicity they have at their disposal.

Yet those who call themselves liberals have something con-

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siderably more constructive to do than to be the noise-makers in the parade of demagogues. They can take the offensive by using the tools at their disposal. They can do what only liberals can—if they know their trade. The technique of an active liberalism is to assist the friends of tyranny to unmask themselves, and to make them completely aware that their steps are watched, their aims known. Authoritarians of all varieties have such a limited imagination that they know few other ways of defeating their opponents than by calumniation and suppression. Liberals, consciously using the instruments of freedom, can place the friends of tyranny in such a setting, limit them by such conditions, bring such a powerful glare to bear upon them as to force them to show to every sensible man and woman what kind of people they are. All demagogues play upon real discontents, exploit real needs and reveal real trends. Therefore they have a certain useful function—as symptoms. The real trends and needs can be acknowledged and taken care of. In other cases the friends of tyranny can be ignored, so that by yelling in darkness they will finally reveal themselves as public nuisances.

An active liberal technique is not based on laissez faire. It requires shrewdness, imagination and strength. The liberal has to be at the same time humble in learning from his enemies and strong in setting the rules of the game. Why should he not set rules under which he himself is willing to play? Does he want to be a liar? No. Then why not expose and denounce liars? The aim of a liberal system is the education and information of public opinion—with the participation, if the liberals are strong enough, of the anti-liberals.

It is impossible to generalize about the amount of freedom that can be left to the friends of tyranny. There is no reason why men in foreign uniforms should not march in the streets, even goose-step if they like—as long as the crowds around give them a good laugh. But there are tragic times of emergency when no place is left for the enemies of freedom other than the penitentiary, just as there are occasions when tyran-

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nicide is the only alternative to a tyrant. The function of the liberal is to prevent this tragic dilemma.

The amount of tolerance that a liberal can have for his enemies is equal to his power to counteract them. It is a question of political and intellectual strength, a question which can be solved by the activity of individual liberals and their organizations. The greater the power, the greater the possibility of checking opponents, of utilizing their cooperation, of forcing them to play the liberal game and of becoming liberal themselves—because liberalism is the best bet. There can be no liberal state without liberal power. The liberal spirit must have the will to power—not the will to suicide. The greatest possible tolerance is the supreme ideal of the liberal. There is nothing morbid or passive in the will to transform into tolerance, and to guarantee through tolerance, the greatest possible power. There is morbidity only in the idea that liberalism is incompatible with responsibility and power. "Every child," Cavour used to say, "can rule with martial law." Cavour was a great liberal, as Lincoln was. These men knew that the problem of all freedoms is one of power and of discrimination, not to be confused with the wholesale granting of immunities. The freedom we allow to ourselves and to others is equal to our power to respect it, and to make it respected. The only people who do not know this or do not want to acknowledge it are those who are for universal tolerance—a position as wrong as that of universal intolerance. Only a God, endowed with unlimited power, can have unlimited tolerance.

Without doubt all theories and opinions have a right to be expressed. But they must also expect to be graded according to their consistency with the right that guarantees them expression. The function of rights is to be instruments of discrimination. The prime function of free speech is to be a lie-detector. Whoever uses it must be ranked according to his understanding of freedom and his devotion to truth. The process of grading and rating is the specific function of a liberal public opinion, directed and controlled by influential groups of liberal men.

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The concrete working of freedom of speech, as of every abstract right, depends on men. It demands men who know what speech is and who believe in making something out of it, and who know what freedom is and believe in it. These men use their power to broaden their tolerance, and offer their tolerance to ideas and interests different from their own because such tolerance is the best road to the discovery of the truth, and they believe in truth. Garrulous or vicious public utterances are the by-product or the left-over of free speech. They do not do any great harm, provided there is power enough to make them bearable. But there is no sense in concentrating our attention on the sometimes smelly by-products instead of on the good thing made possible by good men.

The men on whose liberalism the whole system of freedom of speech rests are not superhuman or chimerical beings. Even today this country has many of them, shrewd, healthy men with a good sense of humor, and this country has an abundance of the qualities which are necessary to the making of such men. But the official philosophy is still that of the cop: an outdated way of thinking, entirely inadequate to our times. And because of this philosophy the instruments available for the defense of political freedom are either handled with a sense of shame and of guilt or are left to the wrong men. What is needed is a readjustment of theory to existing practice. From duplicity of standards there is nothing to be gained.

The liberal faith leads to intransigence toward illiberal ideas and to charity toward illiberal men. It has only to gain from a realistic, unsuperstitious approach. It is aggressive, keen-eyed and good-humored. Those who believe in it and practice it have to be equally skilled in the act of mercy and in the handling of the whip.

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Recent Highlights in Astronomy

NEWTON LACY PIERCE

HIGHLIGHTS attract the attention, but if the remainder of a picture be unlighted they seldom give a clear idea of their individual importance, or of their relation to the whole. So it is with the highlights of astronomy. Nevertheless, they are interesting in themselves and perhaps a few are surrounded by enough illuminated background that we may, even if imperfectly, judge their merit.

The sun, as our nearest star, has ever commanded the interest of astronomers, for if we can determine the physical conditions existing in the sun we can better understand the physical state and behavior of other stars. New methods of studying the sun are therefore of particular interest. Two men, M. Bernard Lyot at the Pic du Midi Observatory in France and Dr. Robert McMath at the McMath-Hulbert Observatory of the University of Michigan, have recently developed new and highly successful methods for the study of the solar atmosphere.

Lyot, by a brilliant application of known optical principles to the problem, has succeeded in photographing the solar corona, that great outer envelope of the sun, without an eclipse. Others have attempted this, but unsuccessfully because of the tremendous scattering of the sun's light by the earth's atmosphere. The essential condition for the successful photographing of the corona is that the intensity of the scattered sunlight shall be less than the intensity of the corona. This condition exists at the time of total eclipse of the sun. Lyot recognized that the scattered light, which had barred success for other observers, was due to scattering of sunlight within the telescope as well as in the earth's atmosphere. With an ingenious optical design he was able to reduce this source of trouble to a minimum. Then by observing at a high altitude, well above most of the dust and water-vapor of the lower atmosphere which scatters sunlight so effectively, he was able to reduce the scattered light surrounding the solar image to an intensity below that of the corona and thus successfully to photograph the

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brighter parts of this gaseous envelope of the sun. His studies of the changes in form and brightness of the corona will add much to our knowledge of the sun. This does not mean that costly eclipse expeditions are no longer necessary, for they are, but Lyot's work will without doubt add direction and effectiveness to the work of future expeditions.

The spectroheliograph, an instrument developed by Hale many years ago for photographing the sun through the light of one spectral line, has been the chief instrument for the study of the sun's outer layers. McMath, with rare instrumental genius, has adapted motion picture technique to this instrument. By so doing he has been able to get several pictures a minute, instead of one every five to ten minutes as with the original spectroheliograph. Thus he has obtained, for periods of an hour or so at a time, nearly continuous records of the very interesting and often inexplicable changes occurring in the solar atmosphere. Of especial interest are his photographic records of the motions of prominences, those enormous masses of hydrogen and calcium gas which shoot out from the sun at high velocities. Previous observers had noted sudden accelerations in the motions of the prominences, with the peculiar effect that each resulting velocity was usually a multiple of the original one. Many have doubted the accuracy of these abrupt accelerations because of the time-lapse between successive exposures, but McMath's results, with many more exposures per unit time, have confirmed these sudden changes for which there is at present no explanation. McMath and his associates have obtained a wealth of valuable observational data which, when adequately studied, should greatly increase our knowledge of the outer portion of the sun.

In the field of theoretical astrophysics, the recent work of Professor H. A. Bethe of Cornell on the source of stellar energy is one of the most notable of recent contributions. This problem is one that has intrigued many investigators, and to which many have contributed. It has been fairly well understood for quite a number of years that whatever process supplies the energy of the stars must involve a transformation of mass into energy. One process by means of which this may take place is the change of atoms of one kind into another, with the release of an amount of energy corresponding to the change in the total mass. For example, the mass of the hydrogen atom is 1.00813 and that of the helium atom is 4.00386. If, therefore, by some process or other, four hydrogen atoms could be converted into one helium atom there would result a loss of 0.02866 mass units, or 1/141 of the original mass. Hydrogen is,

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per unit mass, the best source of energy of any of the atoms, and furthermore is the most abundant element in the ordinary stars. If only 1/1000 of the solar mass were hydrogen, and this could all be converted into helium, there would be enough energy released to maintain the solar radiation at its present rate for over 100 million years.

Bethe has explored the possible transformations which would produce energy and finds that, under the conditions existing in the interiors of the ordinary stars, the following chain of reactions can take place. The proton (hydrogen nucleus), when added to ordinary carbon C^{12} (superscripts are masses), gives the nitrogen isotope N^{13} with radiation of energy. Isotopes, we recall, are atoms of different mass but the same chemical properties. The nitrogen isotope N^{13} then loses a positive electron and changes into the carbon isotope C^{13}. The addition of a proton changes this into ordinary nitrogen N^{14} with emission of energy, and another proton transforms this into oxygen O^{15} with further escape of energy. This goes over into N^{15}, "heavy" nitrogen, with the loss of a positive electron. Nitrogen N^{15} plus a proton might form ordinary oxygen O^{16}, but Bethe has calculated that it is several thousand times more probable that the addition of a proton would split the nucleus, giving helium He^4 and the original carbon C^{12}. Thus the carbon acts as a catalyst for the transformation of hydrogen into helium, a process which will continue until all of the hydrogen has been used. Bethe calculates that this process will supply sufficient energy for the sun at temperatures of 18 to 21 million degrees, depending on the percentages of hydrogen and nitrogen available. These temperatures, computed from nuclear theory, are in good agreement with the central temperature of the sun as determined from astrophysical data. It therefore appears that the source of stellar energy for the ordinary stars like the sun has been solved. The very fast radiation of the giant stars cannot be explained in this way but Bethe's brilliant work has opened up a new and intriguing field of astrophysical investigation.

The study of the general structure of our galactic system is occupying the attention of a good many astronomers at the present time. A majority of the stellar systems outside our own, the external galaxies, show some sort of spiral structure and it is reasonable to assume that our own galaxy, if viewed from a suitable position, would exhibit a more or less similar form. This is obviously an important problem, for the study of possible spiral structure in our own galaxy may help to explain the character of spiral structure in general. There are numerous ave-

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nues of approach to this problem —determination of the distances and motions of selected groups of stars, star counts in selected regions, studies of variable stars, especially of Cepheid variables whose periods of variation are closely correlated with their intrinsic luminosities—that is, with their actual rather than apparent brightness. There is, however, one outstanding difficulty. Because of the unsuitable situation of the sun, the problem cannot be solved without first making a determination of the absorption of starlight by the clouds of obscuring material scattered through our galaxy. We now know that the amount of this absorbing material is considerable, but its exact extent and density in various directions from the sun is not certainly known.

One method of studying the amount of this absorption is to determine the color excess for stars of spectral classes B and A, the hotter and bluer stars. If we observe these stars in blue light and in yellow light we find a certain difference between the blue and yellow magnitudes for a given star. Further, by choosing stars relatively near the sun and well away from the Milky Way, we can feel certain that the observed magnitudes are reasonably free from the effects of absorption. The differences between blue and yellow magnitudes, thus determined for each spectral class, may be adopted as standards. If, now, we determine this magnitude difference for stars which are near or within the Milky Way we find that, according to our adopted standards, these stars are redder than they should be for their respective spectral classes. This "color excess" is due to the fact that more blue light is absorbed by the obscuring clouds than red light, and hence the very blue B-type stars will yield the best determination since the effect is greatest for them. It is evident that if we know the distances of these stars and their color excesses we can determine the amount of absorption effective along the line of sight to each star.

Much work has been done in the past few years on the determination of color excesses. One of the most notable studies of this sort has recently been made by Professors Stebbins, Huffer, and Whitford working at the Washburn and Mt. Wilson observatories. Stebbins and his associates have measured the colors of 1332 B-type stars with a photoelectric photometer, the color excesses so determined being considerably more accurate than could be obtained by the usual photographic methods.

They have determined from photometric measures, made in various regions of the spectra of a selected group of these stars, that the absorption varies as $1/\lambda$, where λ is the wave-length. From this law of selective absorption they then deduce that the total absorp-

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tions in visual and in photographic light are, respectively, seven and nine times the color excess. They find that the strongly reddened B-type stars, that is, those B-type stars which, though still blue, show a much higher ratio of yellow to blue light than the standard for their spectral class, are in or near the Milky Way and always within the zone in which no extragalactic nebulae are observed. This indicates that the obscuring clouds are mostly in or near the plane of the galaxy. There apparently is a limit to the absorbing material in the direction of the galactic anticenter, for in this region there is no star with a color excess greater than 0.3 magnitude, which would mean a maximum obscuration of about two magnitudes, since in visual light the total absorption is seven times the color excess. However, in the opposite direction, toward the center of the galaxy, they find no such limit and none would be expected to be observable. In fact, in this direction they find that in certain regions there is a total absorption of three or four magnitudes in less than one parsec, or 3300 light-years. That is, only about 1/20 to 1/40 of a star's light would be transmitted through one parsec of this obscuring material.

These investigators have made special studies of three bright regions in the Milky Way, one in Sagittarius, one in Cygnus, and the double cluster in Perseus. They find that the color excesses in each of these regions are all greater than 0.1 magnitude, which means that the total absorption by material between us and these stars is at least 0.75 magnitude. Thus, even the brightest parts of the Milky Way are only half as bright as they would be if there were no obscuring clouds intervening.

We see from this work that the absorption in space caused by obscuring clouds is considerable near the galactic plane and, further, that it is far from uniform so that no single correction can be made which will apply to all regions. The determination of the exact nature of this obscuring matter and its extent must be left to the future. Stebbins and his associates have made a signal contribution to the study of this problem, which must be reasonably well solved before a clear structural picture of our galactic system can be obtained.

A Crisis in the Dance

JOHN MARTIN

THE American dance, which came into being something less than forty years ago when Isadora Duncan rediscovered the long-forgotten principles of the most ancient of the arts, has developed so rapidly since then on the basis of her radical revelation

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that it has developed itself into a major crisis. This does not involve aesthetic matters, but financial ones. A new art form (it has somehow got itself labeled as "modern" though its roots are in pre-history) has evolved out of the simple experimental stage in which a single dancer accompanied by a pianist could compass all the possibilities that had been discovered in the medium, into the stage of full-fledged maturity in which it requires a company of highly trained dancers, an adequately set stage and a musical ensemble of orchestral proportions. In short, it has entered that class of artistic activities in which admission fees even of capacity audiences in buildings of practicable size are insufficient to meet the costs of production.

In this same category are the art museum, the public library, the symphony orchestra and the better grade of opera company. All of these, whether free to the public or not, exist only with the aid of subsidy. For the dance, however, there is today no subsidy in sight, and unless steps are taken without delay to remedy the situation, tomorrow there will be no dance. The dancer himself is powerless; he can no more turn his art backwards to the stage of undevelopment at which it can support itself than the chicken can crawl back into the egg.

For the traditional ballet the situation is quite different, to be sure. Private subsidies and "foundations" provide it, as always, with fairly generous support, by far the larger portion of which goes to the Ballet Russe and other European companies. Certainly it is right and proper that these traditional theatrical dances should be preserved and transplanted and encouraged to grow with the times, but for those who believe that America has something to contribute to world culture besides the adaptation of Old World traditions, this is manifestly inadequate. Indigenous manifestations of art are clearly more in need of nurture and preservation, for if they are not supported here where alone they exist they are obviously not to be supported. Whether in any given instance they are worthy of support is, of course, another matter and one that can be settled only when they have been subjected to the test of time. Unless they are maintained and encouraged to survive, however, they can never be subjected to this test, and thus the vicious circle is completed. A certain gamble is unavoidably involved. After two generations of experimentation and growth, including a dozen years of phenomenal progress, the inappropriately named "modern" dance bears strong evidence of being the most significant original contribution that America has made to the arts. To insist, even tacitly, that it must earn its way commercially or perish is to take

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upon oneself a burden of responsibility to American culture that is not to be lightly assumed.

Because of the rapidity with which the dance has brought itself to maturity, its essential character and functions are not as widely understood as they might be. When they are, there is no doubt that those individuals and institutions that make it their concern to foster the living arts will step into the breach. Unless, however, they do so quickly it will be too late, for the dance has arrived at that turning point where it must either continue to go forward or cease to exist.

A glance at its basis will reveal something of its values. The crux of the matter lies in the transformation wrought by Isadora Duncan in the whole meaning of the dance as a medium of creative art. Before her day all types of dancing that were designed to be presented before audiences fell into the category of spectacle. This might range from the mere exhibition of technical skill and personal charm to the presentation of subtly conceived and exquisitely achieved designs in the classic vein based upon the code of the academic ballet. Whatever the degree of its aesthetic attainments, however, it was an art to be looked at and admired objectively. For Isadora this was not enough. For her the dance, using as it did that medium that lay nearest to the uninhibited potentialities of man to react to his environment, namely, the movement of the body actuated by emotional impulse, was capable of a more profound service.

Actually hers was a return of the dance to its oldest and most fundamental functions, those functions by which primitive men give expression to their unintellectualized concepts in terms of magic, religion and social rituals. It is doubtful, however, that Isadora was concerned with any anthropological or abstract aesthetic theories; she was merely casting aside the accumulation of arbitrary codes and conventions that stood between her and the full expression of her inner vision. It was purely and simply a return to the nature of man and his inherent processes of expression, a romantic revolution in the best meaning of the phrase. Though no other dancer of modern times had ever attempted anything of the sort, Isadora's radicalism was not by any means a strange and isolated thing. To sense the power of movement as a medium of emotional communication was quite in tune with the thinking of the more progressive spirits of the time, for this was the period of Einfühlung and "inner mimicry" and kinesthesia and the conditioned reflex, of Lipps and Groos and Vernon Lee and Pavlov and William James.

Until the nature of Isadora's contribution is understood, it is impossible to understand the super-

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structure that has been built upon it by others. She herself was applauded and even idolized for the sheer force of her personal power, but it is to be questioned whether more than a handful of her contemporaries grasped the underlying principle of her art. She was imitated superficially, accused of trying to revive the dance of ancient Greece, of "interpreting" music, of being a self-expressionist; but nobody by following any of these directions was able to equal or even to approximate her results. Only now a dozen years after her death is the significance of her achievement beginning to be fully recognized.

To reduce this achievement to a few words, it was the discovery that movement spontaneously produced as the externalization of inner feeling is the substance of which the dance is made. Heretofore dances had been composed from an objective vocabulary of specific attitudes, actions and transitions. Movements of the feet and legs plus movements of the arms plus attitudes of the head and torso constituted a composition, the purpose of which was to exhibit the dancer to his best advantage in an effective combination of lines and forms with an established code of perfection as the standard of reference. With Isadora, life itself became the standard of reference, and not movements but movement became important. The dancer now carved his dance out of a continuum of movement, as it were, instead of assembling individual elements of a comparatively static sort, much as the sculptor carves his statue out of the rhythmic continuity of solid stone instead of piecing together bits with independent and self-contained dimensions. Such a continuum of movement, in order to be more than mere random motion, must obviously be rooted deeply in emotional conviction and communicative intent. With Isadora herself and all the truly gifted dancers who have followed her, this results in a compelling motor experience for the spectator in which he automatically identifies himself with the dancer and participates vicariously in the emotional impulses that underlie the dance.

To have uncovered such a medium and proved its validity with overwhelming success was manifestly a great work. Indeed, nothing has happened in the dance before or since that compares with it in importance, for it restored an art that had lapsed into charming but remote and classical aestheticism to its native and historic estate as a living creative force. But if Isadora made the revelation, she did not carry it to maturity. Her dance was, as she knew, not of the stuff of the theatre; it was always the outpouring of an individual self and hence lyrical instead of dramatic, however profound or tragic it might be. By

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the same token, it was without spatial awareness—a figure in a vacuum, its movements small and personal. But the greatest limitation of all was her dependence upon music, which rendered the evolution of any principles of independent choreographic form impossible. Of this limitation, too, she was well aware. She even went so far as to admit frankly that the practice of dancing to symphonic music and the like was indefensible, but only the stimulation of music put "the motor in her soul". Though she was not concerned with visualizing either the content of the music or its form, but took from it only the emotional excitement that drove her to move, this was nevertheless a serious handicap to the development of autonomous form for a truly creative art. In her personal practice she overroad it by her genius, but the problem itself she left unsolved.

The great heritage she bequeathed was fraught with responsibilities, and those who have come after her have carried it forward with remarkable intuition and independence of spirit. It has devolved upon them to discover the principles of choreographic form, the true relationship between dance and the music that accompanies it, the interaction of movement and the space that contains it, and the general transformation of a lyric art into a choric theatre art.

Amazingly enough, these results have not only been aimed at but in large measure accomplished by as gallant a crew of artists as ever starved for a conviction. Chief among them are Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman and Hanya Holm, who have succeeded by sheer grit and the almost fanatical support of a large audience of young people in making their art known from coast to coast. When the two big radio chains that control virtually all the concert bookings over the country have refused to handle them because they could see no commercial profit in a type of dance that was serious in intent instead of merely decorative and amusing, they have booked their own tours, dancing in college gymnasiums where necessary, and lecturing and teaching between concerts in order to spread their gospel and incidentally to eke out their expenses.

As the art itself has grown, its problems have become more demanding. There has never been money enough to provide the right music; usually a piano has to serve though the dancers know that an orchestra, and frequently one of a special type, is needed. Costumes have had to be made from inadequate materials, and without an artist to design them, and stage settings have necessarily consisted of nothing but rather dreary curtains. Sometimes audiences have been led to believe that all these things were the result of delib-

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erate choice and a kind of grim asceticism, but nothing could be farther from the truth. They are the result of lack of funds and nothing else. That audiences have been made and even converted to a passionate partisanship under such conditions speaks well for the quality of the art itself, for certainly it has had no superficial gilding.

The form of a choric theatre art obviously demands a company of dancers, and when there are meagre funds from which to pay salaries there are serious limitations imposed upon the gathering together of a company. Only those dancers who are convinced heart and soul of the idea are willing to make the necessary sacrifice, and even some of them have personal responsibilities that make such sacrifice impossible. Now to add an almost insuperable obstacle the American Guild of Musical Artists, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, has undertaken to organize the dance groups, to demand a minimum wage and a guarantee of employment for them. This is eminently right, to be sure, for the young dancer is entitled to live by his art, in all conscience; it is also completely impracticable, for the leaders of the various companies, who rank as employers, must themselves earn their livelihoods by teaching and other outside activities.

Unless something is done for the American "modern" dance comparable to what has been done for the Ballet Russe, it looks very much as if it is doomed to destruction. This something can be nothing but a reasonable subsidy, not of individuals but of the art itself.

One wonders what would have happened to the Russian Ballet if there had not been the rubles of the czar behind it. If Fokine and Nijinsky and Karsavina and Bolm had had to get their education and technical training as best they could, had had to finance, compose, design and book their own productions as independent individuals, there would certainly never have been a Russian Ballet chapter in the art. On the other hand, if the American dancers of genius were to be combined in some sort of organization similar to the Russian Ballet and given adequate facilities for the creation and presentation of their art, there is every reason to believe that they would write a chapter in the history of the art at least as glowing as that written by the Russian Ballet. They have already evolved a unique and magnificent art form that stems from their own culture; it will be a major tragedy if they are never allowed to return it to the people out of whose lives and environment it has grown. Some fine morning we are likely to wake to find that through inadvertence and neglect we have plowed under something far more vital and difficult to replace than "surplus" cotton crops.

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Discussion

JACOB AT THE FORD IN VERMONT

Dr. Edwin Embree
c/o THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR
Dear Dr. Embree:

My husband and I have just finished reading your "The Education of Teachers" in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, to the accompaniment of such heart-felt "amens!" as must almost have reached your ears.

My husband is Chairman of the State Board of Education of Vermont and hence is wrestling like Jacob at the ford with the problem of teacher training in a small poor but educationally alive State. And I have been for years trying in my amateur outsider's way what you have said here, but really like a person yelling his head off in a nightmare, but apparently not making an audible sound.

So your recognition of the urgency of the problem and its life-and-death importance to our democracy comes like the break of dawn! I was born and brought up in the University faculty world and ever since I can remember have been boiling over the careless contempt of the academic world for the whole problem of educating teachers, and its equally careless negligent and really on the whole complacent acceptance of the poor quality in "schools of education"; a little, I have thought, as if doctors laughed maliciously over dangerous ignorance on the part of health officers without feeling even the responsibility for improving health work which might be expected from ordinary, unprofessional citizens.

So, all in all, you've lightened the hearts of the Fisher family by a great deal. Let the good work go on. You can do it, where another could not.

Admiringly yours,
DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER
Arlington, Vt.

[Ed.'s note: The above letter was printed with Dr. Embree's permission.]

MR. MADISON CITES REALITY

To the Editor:

Peter Drucker's letter objecting to the views expressed in my article on German anti-Semitism in the Summer 1939 AMERICAN SCHOLAR concludes with the assertion that Jews and Christians in Germany had lived in amity and intimacy until Hitler came to power, and that in denying this thesis I side with the Nazis. I would be the last to disagree with Mr. Drucker's beliefs in the matter—and I certainly would go far not to be counted among Hitler's followers—if it were not for stubborn reality.

For instance, Mr. Drucker's insistence that the Spanish persecution of the Jews was racial and not religious in character hardly squares with the fact that its chief perpetrator was Torquemada, the head of the Inquisition. Throughout the 19th century the Jews in Germany, while relatively emancipated and increasingly active, continued to serve as the scapegoat during the periods of crisis. Thus Jewbaiting became violent during the political reaction following Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, during the decade following the panic of 1873, and during the years of postwar defeat and depression. German thinkers, from Fichte to Spengler and Rosenberg, gave forceful expression to this antagonism toward the Jew. Not until the Weimar Republic was it possible for a Jew to become an officer in the army or a professor in a university. German Jews from Börne and Heine to Theodor Herzl and Martin Buber have felt its sting only too keenly. It is significant that the latter were among the chief protagonists of Zionism. And it is because so many Jews sought to escape the stigma of their origin through apostasy that Hitler extended his persecution to include all "non-Aryans." This is a matter of historical record. To argue against it is to indulge in wishful thinking.

CHARLES A. MADISON
New York, N. Y.

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DEMOCRACY IN ENGLAND

To the Editor:

In "The Challenge of Our Times" in the Autumn 1939 AMERICAN SCHOLAR Harold Laski maintains that the chief political effect of the immense economic expansion of the 19th century was to bring the economically privileged middle class to power. The middle class won this victory by an alliance with the working class to which it conceded universal suffrage. Mr. Laski adds that universal suffrage did not seem too high a price to pay so long as political democracy did not challenge economic and social privilege. But today, he declares, the masses are claiming an extension of the democratic idea. The middle class regards that claim as inadmissable and it "prefers rather to fight for its privileges than to give way. . . ."

In elaborating this thesis, Mr. Laski observes that a democratic society involves government by discussion and therefore free play for discussion. He then points out that the present middle and upper class government of Great Britain has limited free discussion during the past few months, "less by outright than by obscure and often obscurantist techniques of control." These "obscure techniques," have long been of interest to me as a student and teacher of politics. Is it possible that within a government of democratic structure there can be institutions, customs, and policies which tend to pervert the general democratic pattern for the benefit of a privileged economic class? I not only believe this is so but I believe the government of England provides a good practical illustration.

The British boast that their democracy is based on universal suffrage. But when the electoral arrangement is closely examined it is discovered to be a parody on democracy. Let us take, for example, the election of 1931. Parties or groups supporting the Conservative Government polled 13,149,000 votes and gained 522 seats in the House of Commons. The Opposition groups including the Labor and the Liberal parties polled 8,434,000 votes but gained only 95 seats. In other words it took roughly 25,000 votes to elect a Conservative but 88,000 votes to elect a member of the Opposition parties. The most recent election, that of 1935, showed a disproportion almost as great. There is no room here to describe the peculiarities of an electoral system which makes this possible. Let it suffice to say that the system has been earnestly supported by the Conservatives against the revisionist demands of less powerful groups. Its chief result is that the House of Commons normally represents a much more conservative point of view than the election would justify. A brief survey of the economic activities of the members shows this very well. In 1935 the great bulk of opposition members, 117 out of 184, were trade union officials. In the Government parties, however, conservative interests predominated. Out of a total of 431 members, 175 members were business men, stockbrokers, or underwriters; the law claimed 73; journalism, 22; and the Army and Navy, other professional groups and landowners 16 each. When one considers that the Opposition polled, as described above, 10,209,000 votes to the Government's 11,792,000 it is clear that the economic and political interests of a large minority of the British people are undemocratically represented in their national legislature.

The policies adopted by Parliament are administered and enforced by the great government departments. It is axiomatic that those who administer law can preserve the intent of the legislators or can practically nullify it in the course of administrative routine. It is always emphasized, therefore, that the civil service should stand above party strife. Its duty is to take no side but to carry out orders in the sense in which they were given. In a democracy the civil service should be recruited on a democratic plan. In form these rules are followed in Great Britain but in actual effect they are not. The overwhelming mass of British officialdom is recruited from the upper economic strata of society and as a result administration is carried on in an atmosphere of conservatism. So true is this that Mr. Laski in his recently published *Parliamentary Government in Great Britain* strongly questions whether the great administrative departments would consent to serve under a Labor Government should one be elected. He believes that in this situation Labor might be forced to establish new agencies of administration paralleling the old departments. The lower ranks of the civil service are filled by examination and their efficiency is high. But the examinations for the administrative classes of the service are so designed that only the members of the upper classes have any good chance to pass them. England has about 150 "public" schools which are in fact expensive private schools preparing the sons of the well-to-do for their careers in government, business, the professions, or the military services. After attending public school the usual procedure is to go to Oxford or Cambridge, another expensive step. It is upon graduation from one of these universities that the sons of the privileged class can claim a unique governmental opportunity. British civil service examinations for the administrative grades are based directly on the course of study at the public schools and at Oxford and Cambridge. In *The British*

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Civil Servant, a book written by Professor W. A. Robson of the University of London, together with twelve other experts, Professor Robson says: "The Diplomatic and Foreign Office staff, for which nomination is required, contains scarcely any one who is not related to or patronized by the aristocracy or the narrow circle of high society. The administrative class which occupies all the controlling positions in the Civil Service, consists to an overwhelming extent of the fortunate few who manage to get to Oxford and Cambridge; and the entrance examination has always been expressly designed for the purpose. The chief officers of local authorities are normally required to be doctors, lawyers, engineers, and so forth, and the appointments are reserved for those who can afford the time and money to acquire expensive educational qualifications. There are also other compartments lower down in the scale which are carefully reserved for those who can attend public school until they are seventeen or eighteen years of age, as compared with the mass of the population, who leave school at fourteen and sixteen years. . . . It is intolerable that the universities of London and of the provincial towns should find their students, drawn largely from the lower social strata, virtually debarred from entry into the highest grades of the service, especially when one considers the relative importance of the work these universities are doing in the social sciences." In passing it is perhaps worth adding to Professor Robson's observations a simple statistic which proves beyond doubt that higher education of any kind in England is a privilege that relatively few enjoy. England has one college student for each 1,013 inhabitants, the United States has one for each 125 inhabitants. England has fewer college students per capita than Switzerland, France, Germany, Italy, or Holland.

I hope it is clear by this time that in the British political game the cards are marked for the middle and upper classes in two of the great branches of government, the legislative and the administrative. What about the third? Perhaps the British judiciary with its tradition of fairness, stability, and dignity, is above and beyond considerations of class. But examination shows unhappily that this is not true. The British legal profession is conservative and so is its interpretation of the law. In Britain as in the United States the courts emphasize the rights of property. And if one agrees with Justice Holmes that judicial decisions are based on "the personal economic predelictions of the judges" there is nothing strange in this, for the members of the legal profession in England are drawn almost entirely from the upper classes of society. The education required for the legal profession is far too expensive for the average Englishman. And more than in any other English-speaking country, rank and connection are necessary for success in the practice of law. This is particularly so in the case of judges for there is traditionally a close connection between the English judiciary and the aristocracy. It is common practice to knight judges on appointment and the vast majority of judges are members of the Conservative party. Members of the judiciary are appointed from the ranks of successful barristers by the Lord Chancellor who is always a member of the House of Lords and of the Cabinet. Successful lawyers in England as in the United States usually reflect the economic and political ideas of their clients who are almost always to be numbered among the economically powerful. When a barrister is elevated to the bench he usually takes his old viewpoint with him. Moreover in the most direct kind of economic interest the English judiciary belongs in the upper classes. Judicial salaries in England are high. Judges of county courts, whose jurisdiction includes the cases tried by justices of the peace in the United States, receive £1,500 a year. Other judicial salaries run as high as £10,000. The holders of these positions are probably not overpaid but their salaries definitely place them in the higher income groups.

A characteristic feature of the English system of justice is the distinction between solicitor and barrister. The solicitor deals with the client and prepares the cases, but hires a barrister (i.e., one who has been admitted to the bar) to conduct the case in court. Each type of lawyer becomes expert in his own work and cases are probably better prepared and presented in English than in American courts. However, this system greatly increases the expensiveness of obtaining justice by litigation and in practice results in placing litigation out of the reach of a large proportion of the population.

Thus all three of the great branches of British government illustrate well, I think, not only that the forms of a democracy may effectively conceal class government but furthermore that this class domination is often exercised by indirect and obscure methods. Other examples in and out of government could just as easily have been chosen to illustrate my point. The House of Lords, which represents a traditional aristocracy, and is not without power, stands as an obvious anachronism in a democratic country. The general effect of propaganda through pageantry is another good illustration. There are 149 gradations or degrees of importance for privileged Eng-

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lishmen—titles that set them above the ordinary citizen. To all those who know England well the enormous influence of background, irrespective of intelligence, is obvious. A prominent connection, the right school tie, the right accent, and other such factors have an importance in English life that is hard to exaggerate.

Let me emphasize in closing that I am no anglophobe. England was chosen as my illustration only because Mr. Laski in his article used English examples. I am convinced that any other capitalistic democracy could present an equally good example of the points I want to emphasize again; first, that to any close observer it must appear certain that the forms of democracy are not incompatible with a large degree of social and economic privilege; and, second, that the political power of the privileged class is often obtained by indirect methods. The question remains unanswered as to whether the masses can ever so successfully challenge the influence which the middle classes exert through their strategic position and their money, that the principles of political democracy may be extended to the economic and social fields.

WINCHESTER H. HEICHER
New York, N. Y.

About Our Authors

Quotation marks usually indicate passages taken directly from autobiographical letters requested from the authors themselves.

It is dangerous to essay a paragraph of information about WILLIAM ALLAN NEILSON for the information would, unawares, become praise. And we are in a position to know. . . . For twenty-two years he was president of Smith College; during the eleven years prior to that he was professor of English at Harvard. He has written for specialists and for laymen; the scope of his writing in the field of English literature has ranged from *The Chief Elizabethan Dramatists* to *Burns, How to Know Him;* he served as editor-in-chief of the second edition of Webster's *New International Dictionary*. . . . For eight years he has been a generous member of that hard-working body of men and women who have been responsible for the character and substance of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR—its Editorial Board.

In the course of his lectures at Columbia where he is a professor in the department of philosophy JOHN HERMAN RANDALL, JR. has referred to three kinds of logic—the inductive, the deductive and the seductive. He himself is at home in all three. In fact, he is much more at home in the world of ideas than in the world of autobiography. Some of his ideas are familiar to those who have read his two earlier articles in these pages ("This So-Called Revolt Against Reason," Summer 1936, and "On the Importance of Being Unprincipled," Spring 1938); those who have read his books (*The Problem of Group Responsibility, The Making of the Modern Mind, Our Changing Civilization*) or the volumes of which he has been co-author (*Introduction to Reflective Thinking, Study in the History of Ideas, Religion and the Modern World, American Philosophy Today and Tomorrow*) will know more directly how indispensable have been his services to THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR throughout the eight years of its life—and how advisedly the word "indispensable" has been used.

BABETTE DEUTSCH writes that she was born and educated in New York City but that she believes herself to be no more provincial than other native New Yorkers in her passion for that metropolis. . . . After graduation from Barnard she was associated with the *Political Science Quarterly* and with Thorstein Veblen. "No economist, however, could teach me to apply the law of diminishing returns to poetry, which has remained my chief interest. I have both practiced and lec-

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tured on the art, and in collaboration with my husband, Dr. Avrahm Yarmolinsky, have produced a number of translations (*Modern Russian Poetry*, *Contemporary German Poetry*, *Russian Poetry* and Chukovsky's *Crocodile*), the latest of them the complete text of Pushkin's novel in verse, *Eugene Onegin*." . . . Miss Deutsch is the author of several novels; *This Modern Poetry*, a book of criticism which is used in colleges scattered throughout the United States; five volumes of verse, the first of which, *Author Banners*, was published in 1919 and the latest, *One Part Love*, has just appeared under the Oxford University Press imprint. . . . "All that can be summed up in lack of imagination —suburban scenery and mentality, mob-mindedness, whether in the kitchen, the forum or the study—I dislike; motoring and playing Mozart's sonatas for four hands I set over against them."

G. A. BORGESE, vigorous citizen of Italy, has lived in the United States since 1931. In that year, while he was visiting professor at the University of California, the fascist oath was imposed on all university professors. Rather than take it he remained in this country. In 1932 he lectured at the New School for Social Research; for the next four years he was professor of comparative literature at Smith College; since then he has been professor of Italian literature at the University of Chicago. . . . During his Italian years he was professor of German literature at the University of Rome and the University of Milan successively, and professor of esthetics and the history of criticism at the latter university. In 1917 and 1918 (while Orlando was Premier) he was head of the Press and Propaganda Bureau and in 1918 served as head of the Italian delegation to the Inter-Allied Conference in London. The growth and career of Italian fascism he opposed consistently—and he is incapable of halfway performance. . . . In 1937 the Viking Press published his first book written in English, *Goliath, The March of Fascism* (his novel of post-war disintegration, *Rubè*, had been translated into English in 1923). . . . Last June the University of Chicago Chapter elected him to honorary membership in Phi Beta Kappa.

JOHN P. CHAMBERLAIN, whose "Megalopolis" was published in the Winter 1938-39 number, graduated from Princeton last June. His chief undergraduate outlet was the *Nassau Lit* of which he was managing editor.

FRITZ KARL MANN, since 1936 professor of political economy at the Graduate School of the American University, Washington, D. C., took an active part in science as well as in politics in his homeland, Germany. During the World War he was political and economic adviser to the Supreme Command of the German Army. Later he was a member of the German Peace Delegation in Bucharest and adviser to the German government in Eastern European questions and fiscal matters. In the interim between the immediately post-War years and 1935, he directed the Institute for Eastern German Policies in Koenigsberg, founded and directed the Institute of International Finance in Cologne, was professor of political economy at the Universities of Kiel, Breslau, Koenigsberg and Cologne, and Dean of the University of Cologne. He became "emeritus" in 1935. . . . His academic work has been interlarded with the writing of ten books (dealing with the history of economic thought, war-economy, fiscal and tax policies, Eastern European and Balkan questions, sociology and educational problems) and with the editing of half a dozen scientific series and the publication of several hundred articles in scientific magazines. It is quite natural that his pet aversion should be lounge lizards; and it is pleasant to know that his hobbies are swimming, skiing and horseback riding with his wife and four children.

WILLIAM V. HOUSTON writes: "It is almost always difficult to find anything about a physicist that is of general interest. His hobbies and enthusiasms are usually contained in his work, and that is often of interest only to the small group of men the world over who are engaged in the same type of endeavor. The fascination of the laboratory is hard to explain; but to anyone who has been fortunate enough to be active in physics during the past decade or so the growth of scientific knowledge and activity seems tremendous. One of the consequences of the last war, and the present one, undoubtedly is and will be to make the United States the world's center of scientific activity. It is increasingly apparent that only a wide dispersion of acquaintance with the scientific method of thought, as opposed to a knowledge of the results of science, among the intelligent people of our country will enable us to maintain our civilization in the face of the forces that threaten it. . . . My present activity is pretty well described by the title of professor of physics of the California Institute of Technology." . . . His past activity has embraced the holding of two fellowships—one form the National Research Council and the other from Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

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MAURICE MANDELBAUM, who can write about philosophies of history but not about himself, graduated from Dartmouth; did graduate work at Harvard, and at the University of Berlin where he studied the philosophy of history primarily; taught for a year in the department of biography at Dartmouth; in 1936 received a Ph.D. in philosophy from Yale; and in 1938 published *The Problem of Historical Knowledge*. During the past five years he has been teaching philosophy at Swarthmore. "For the present I am chiefly occupied with ethical theory, but certain problems in epistemology and esthetics constantly tempt me into those fields." . . . His year at Dartmouth was not so far afield from his interests as it appears to be on the surface since the material was concerned with cultural history, i.e., with modern intellectual movements.

During the winter months STITH THOMPSON teaches at Indiana University where he has been a professor of English since 1929; during the summer months he is likely to be in consultation with folklorists in Germany, Sweden or Finland "over a tabu or the folk explanations as to why women are bad or why they laugh much or why a snake has no legs" or on a folk-tale collecting expedition. During 1937-38 he was president of the American Folk-Lore Society and in 1937 the United States delegate to the International Association for European Ethnology and Folklore Congress. As one might safely conclude from the foregoing, his dominant interest since he embarked on an academic career has been folklore, although he has at times been deflected into editing a textbook (see his early *Manual and Notebook for English Composition*, and *English Composition in Theory and Practice*, written in collaboration with Henry Seidel Canby and others in 1933). Twenty years ago he wrote *European Tales among the North American Indians*; ten years ago the Harvard University Press published his *Tales of the North American Indians*, a collection of stories edited with comparative notes; and at intervals during the years 1932-37 the six volumes of his *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* were published jointly by the Finnish Academy of Sciences and Indiana University. "This series, which has proved to be my most momentous quest, provides a 3000-page classified and scientifically numbered catalog of all the motifs in folk-literature the globe over."

In Italy MAX ASCOLI taught in Italian universities from 1926 to 1931 and wrote several books on political philosophy and jurisprudence. Coming to this country because his opinions differed from those of the fascist régime, he was invited to join the faculty of an institution which welcomes divergent views—the New School for Social Research—and has become increasingly expert in setting forth his thought in English. His first book to be published in this country was *Intelligence in Politics* (1936); in 1937 he was co-editor of *Political and Economic Democracy*, written by the members of The Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research; last winter he wrote a third book, *Fascism for Whom?*, in collaboration with Arthur Feiler. . . . "By far the most important thing that has happened to me in these last two years is the fact that I have become a citizen of the United States. As an American liberal I can now dare to write about those of my fellow citizens who call themselves liberals, without running the risk that some of them may have me deported as an undesirable alien." THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR will be as happy to use articles proceeding from his new emancipation as they were those that discussed the Italian fascist scene ("Dulce et Decus pro Dictatore," Summer 1937, and "The Fascisti's March on Scholarship," Winter 1938).

JOHN MARTIN, educated for the theater, served an apprenticeship as actor, director, playwright and teacher, and since 1927 has been dance critic for the paper that carries all the news that's fit to print, the *New York Times*. He is also the author of several books on the dance (*Modern Dance*, *American Dancing* and *Introduction to the Dance*) and of articles in the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, the *National Encyclopedia* and various magazines both in this country and abroad.

NEWTON L. PIERCE, who received his Ph.D. from Princeton University in 1937 and is now a member of the staff of the department of astronomy, has spent the past two years in making observations of eclipsing variables with the 23-inch telescope.

WINCHESTER H. HEICHER teaches in the department of government at Washington Square College, New York University, where he was once a Penfield Fellow in international affairs, diplomacy and *belles lettres*. During 1931-32 he did newspaper work in Geneva, following his graduation from Stanford and graduate work at the University of Oregon.

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